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WITHDRAWN

Early German Romanticism

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EARLY GERMAN ROMANTICISM

ITS FOUNDERS AND
HEINRICH VON KLEIST

BY

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TO MY WIFE

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FRIEDA OSGOOD SILZ

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“Sie haben mich immer in der Zurückgezogenheit meiner Lebensart für isoliert von der Welt gehalten, und doch ist vielleicht niemand inniger damit verbunden, als ich.”

KLEIST, V, p. 341, ll. 12–15

FOREWORD

THE following study is based on the convictions that the relation of Heinrich von Kleist and the German Romanticists to the German Classicists is not antipodal but resultant and complementary; that Classicism and Romanticism are organic parts of the same cultural, philosophical, and poetic development; that early Romanticism is to be distinguished from later Romanticism; that Heinrich von Kleist, though he came into immediate contact only with later Romanticists, is to be numbered, by right of personal and poetic character as well as of historical position, with the originators of Romanticism; and that he approximately succeeded, where they had failed, in embodying their common ideals in poetic production.

It follows from these premises that I find myself in fundamental disagreement with two predecessors, who are of unequal merit: with Ernst Kayka, whose treatise (*Kleist und die Romantik, Ein Versuch*. Berlin, Duncker, 1906) is vitiated by an entirely inadequate conception of the nature of Romanticism; and with Fritz Strich, whose brilliant and artistically executed antithesis (*Deutsche Klassik und Romantik, oder Vollendung und Unendlichkeit, Ein Vergleich*. München, Meyer und Jessen, 1922, 3d ed. 1928) seems to me not to have escaped the danger of artificiality.

The present study makes no claim to the completeness and justice of a history of literature. It aims merely to be corrective and suggestive. Without attempting a final delineation of either Heinrich von Kleist or German Classicism and Romanticism,—an undertaking for which, in my opinion, we are not yet ready,—it tries to point out certain significant relationships between a very complex individual and a very complex literary movement.

The researches on which this study is based were begun in 1920 during the preparation of an earlier monograph (*Heinrich von Kleist's Conception of the Tragic*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, and Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1923), and were continued in Germany in 1926 and 1927, when I held a fellowship of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation of New York. To the donors and trustees of this foundation I here publicly acknowledge my indebtedness. The treatise, substantially as it now stands, was written in Germany during July, 1927; a grant from the Milton Fund of Harvard University enabled me to revise it during the summer of 1928. My teachers, Professors Kuno Francke, W. G. Howard, and J. A. Walz, have kindly read my manuscript, and I have benefited by their suggestions.

W. S.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
September, 1928

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Early German Romanticism

I

Science and Philosophy

THE generation of German writers who, at the end of the eighteenth century, took their places beside Goethe and Schiller, entered upon a heritage very similar to that of the poets of Weimar. Their lives were determined by the same great forces of the century: Rationalism, which had reached its culmination in Kant; Emotionalism, which had produced the doctrines of Rousseau and of the "Sturm und Drang"; and the French Revolution, which may be regarded as a resultant of both rational and emotional forces. They witnessed an astounding development of science, and their lives and poetry were borne on a mighty stream of idealistic philosophy.

In the hands of Laplace and Volta, Mesmer and Galvani, Priestley and Lavoisier the natural sciences were advancing by leaps and bounds, and every day, it seemed, was bringing revolutionizing discoveries. Scientific interest and activity were not limited to professional scientists, but were pursued, more or less amateurishly, by all persons of education. The scientific and the poetic imagination inflamed each other; the mind leaped with intuitive speed from hypothesis to hypothesis, out-

stripping empirical verification; the most ardent poet seemed the best scientist, and the participants in a colloquium on poetry could be exhorted to study physics, as being now the source of the most sacred revelations of nature in all its phases.¹ While there was no great difference between the scientific methods of Goethe and those of Kleist and Novalis,—methods that would not be called strictly scientific to-day,—this enthusiasm naturally took a stronger hold on the younger generation. It can scarcely be estimated how much science profited in that youthful phase by the bold poetic flights of Schelling or Novalis or the mystic fantasies of Romantic popular scientists like Schubert and Ritter; neither can it be determined how much of the fantastic and morbid in later Romanticism is due to the overstimulation of the imagination in that age of breathless speed in scientific and pseudo-scientific discovery. The veils began to be lifted from the mysterious abysses of nature and the human soul; vast new provinces were being added to the realm of human knowledge; and the restraining walls of life were being pushed back so fast that many rushed to the conclusion that these walls had disappeared entirely. “Unendlichkeit” becomes a favorite word and conception of the time, and is by no means restricted to the Romanticists. In the idealism of Schiller and the universality of Goethe, no less than in the utterances of the Romanticists, there is a proud faith

in unlimited human progress, a spaciousness of outlook, which contrasts strangely with the pettiness of contemporaneous public life.

German Classicism and German Romanticism are both rooted in the "Sturm und Drang." In fact, Romanticism might be said to differ from Classicism to the extent that it revives the elements of "Sturm und Drang" latent in Classicism and appeals from the classical severity of the older Goethe and Schiller to their younger selves. Herder, the teacher of Goethe, was also the teacher of the Romanticists, though they did not acknowledge him as such and gave credit to Goethe for ideas which they might have taken directly from Herder. When Friedrich Schlegel calls humanity an infinite plant, and pure vegetation the finest form of life,² or declares that the highest beauty, morality, and love are vegetable in character,—for all beauty is natural, and all nature is organic,³—he is expressing, in his own characteristic fashion, a central idea not only of Goethe's but of Herder's, the idea of organic growth. It was this idea which made the Romanticists respectful of the products of time, and averse, like Goethe, to revolutionary upheavals. The fine historical sense and poetic intuition which made Herder so sensitive and congenial an interpreter of individuals and of races, however remote; his tolerant, appreciative manner of literary criticism; his enthusiasm for Shakespeare, for medieval German art and poetry,

especially the folksong; his high estimation of the unique, the original, and the irrational; his conviction of the value of individuality and personality — in all these directions Herder is the great pioneer of German Classicism and Romanticism. Schleiermacher's individualistic ethics are based on Herder's;⁴ the Romantic conception of art as expressed by Wackenroder is in his spirit; his demand for a national mythology is merely echoed by Friedrich Schlegel.⁵ Wackenroder's emotional, musical temper made him especially susceptible of Herder's influence, but Novalis, too, who was of a less ductile nature, stands close to Herder, not merely as the poet of night and death.⁶ It is the extraordinary vitality and fertility of Herder's ideas, more than anything else, that makes it impossible to disentangle the roots of German Classicism and Romanticism.

The continuous growth of idealistic philosophy in Germany from Kant to Schelling forms the spiritual background of the entire Classic-Romantic age and gives it its peculiar philosophical-poetic character. The importance of Kant for the Classicists, especially Schiller, is well known; but it is not generally recognized that he is even more important for the Romanticists: Romanticism without Kant is as inconceivable as Romanticism without Herder. One might say that the difference between "Sturm und Drang" and Romanticism is due chiefly to the appearance of Kant's writings

in the interval.⁷ In so far as they continued the tendencies of the "Sturm und Drang," the Romantics might appear, to the superficial view, to be adversaries of Kant; more profoundly considered, they are his heirs and continuators.

Kant completely destroyed the foundations of eighteenth-century rationalism by establishing the limits of the realm of reason, which this rationalism had believed infinite. He demonstrated to a generation nurtured in this rationalism that sensory cognition is no basis for the assumption of metaphysical knowledge, that we cannot comprehend through empirical means the true essence of things. Not many of Kleist's Romantic contemporaries experienced as painfully as he the consequences of this recognition, but it became an indispensable presupposition of their philosophy and poetry as well as of his.⁸ Himself the supreme product of Rationalism, Kant was destined historically to overcome it: in him reason attained the ultimate clarity necessary to the discernment of its own limitations, and he prepared the way, directly and indirectly, for Romanticism. His doctrine, which undermined the prestige of sensible reality, turned the eyes of his young contemporaries in upon themselves and out upon another world: one cannot doubt that the irrationality of the Romantics, their avidity of the mysterious, the nocturnal, and the ultra-phenomenal, was greatly furthered by the teachings of Kant. The case of

Heinrich von Kleist shows how the study of Kantian philosophy could intensify the thirst for truth into a "metaphysical longing" that finally bore him, like Novalis, off on a great voyage of discovery. Kant's sharp differentiation of subject and object, of subjective and objective fact, constituted the philosophical basis for the dualism of consciousness which proved so oppressive to the Romantic generation.

To the early Romanticists, the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* seemed a profound masterpiece and Kant a new Moses whose tablets of categories brought light to the human mind;⁹ they defended him, on occasion, most vigorously against Herder's attacks.¹⁰ The author of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* had assigned to beauty a high place and a conciliatory function in man's intellectual life, and had prepared the way for Schiller's as well as Schelling's aesthetic philosophy. Friedrich Schlegel's aesthetics are derived from Kant and Schiller, in whose common terminology he defines the beautiful as "der allgemeingültige Gegenstand eines uninteressierten Wohlgefällens."¹¹ Kant's aesthetics affected not only indirectly (through Fichte) but directly the Romantic thinker *par excellence*, Schelling, who formulated philosophically the aesthetic idealism of the whole period.

In the early days of Romanticism, however, it was Fichte who seemed the greatest living metaphysician,¹² the model and type of all philosophers,

and one of the three great intellectual forces of the age.¹³ And Fichte not only seemed to his contemporaries, but regarded himself as implicitly and explicitly the disciple and continuator of Kant; Friedrich Schlegel, in fact, who calls Fichte "einen Kant in der zweiten Potenz," simply identifies their philosophies.¹⁴ From the point of view of the present, also, Fichte's subjectivistic and egocentric doctrine appears to be the inevitable outcome of Kant's idealism. A philosophy which establishes an idea or ideal as primary, which lays emphasis not on external phenomena but on our subjective modes of perceiving them, is but a short step removed from a philosophy which views all objects as being the product of the subject. Thus Fichte completed the destruction of objective reality which Kant had begun, and carried German philosophy to the dizzy heights of absolute idealism. From Fichte's position, it is but a step to the formula "das Leben ein Traum," which became so important in Romantic thought and poetry. From Fichte, again, it is only a step to the ironical attitude in which the ego looks with a superior smile upon the non-ego, the creator upon his creation. The similarity between Romantic "irony" and Schiller's conception of the "Spieltrieb" is not surprising when one considers that both are based on the idealistic philosophy developed by Kant and Fichte. Novalis' philosophical system, which he called "magical idealism," is an outgrowth of

Fichtean doctrine; and it is not unjust to describe Schelling's "Naturphilosophie" as the transference to nature of the basic ideas of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*.¹⁵

Fichte's nature led him to continue especially the strong ethical tendency in Kant's philosophy, to draw the logical inferences from Kant's categorical imperative in terms of individual activity and obligation. The *Addresses to the German Nation* are an application of Kant's ethics to a practical emergency. From the fundamental law of Kantian ethics, moral self-determination, it followed that no individual must be treated as a means, but only as an end in himself, as a free agent. This is the core of the individualistic morality of Romanticism; it is found in Kleist, in Schleiermacher, in Friedrich Schlegel, and it reechoes much later in Hebbel's insistence on the sanctity of personality.

II

The Rational and the Irrational

THE early Romanticists, who grew up in the atmosphere of Kantian philosophy, were by no means hostile to reason, as the pre-Kantian "Sturm und Drang" had been. They were men of intellect, of supreme intelligence and extraordinary analytical power, masters of incisive criticism and trenchant polemic. A mere perusal of the fragments of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, with their keen, often sustained reasoning and intellectual rigor, should suffice to disprove the myth of the vague, emotional, unreasoning Romanticist. The founders of Romanticism had no quarrel with the true Rationalists, with Kant or Lessing; there is abundant evidence of their admiration for these men; what they opposed and ridiculed was pseudo-Rationalism, the dilute and degenerate "Aufklärung" which in Nicolai reduced itself to an absurdity. In making this distinction between the true and the false Rationalism and in combating the latter, the early Romanticists were again in accord with Goethe and Schiller.

Thus does Friedrich Schlegel, the Romanticist, speak of man's rational faculty: "Verstand aber ist das, worauf es eigentlich ankommt, wenn von dem Geiste eines Menschen die Rede ist. Verstand

ist das Vermögen der Gedanken . . . das Göttlichste, was es im menschlichen Geiste gibt. In diesem Sinne ist Verstand . . . nicht viel weniger als das höchste Gut. Durch seine Allmacht wird der ganze Mensch innerlich heiter und klar. Er bildet alles was ihn umgibt und was er berührt . . . und alles Äusserliche wird ihm unter der Hand zum Innerlichen. Auch die Widersprüche lösen sich in Harmonie auf; alles wird ihm bedeutend, er sieht alles recht und wahr, und die Natur, die Erde und das Leben stehen wieder in ihrer ursprünglichen Grösse und Göttlichkeit freundlich vor ihm.”¹ And in a valedictory at the end of the *Athenäum* the editor says prophetically of the new century: “Aber auch der Verstand wird seine Allmacht zeigen; er, der das Gemüt zum Charakter, das Talent zum Genie adelt, das Gefühl und die Anschauung zur Kunst läutert.”² Novalis terms reason “das leitende Vermögen unserer Weltkräfte,”³ and even Caroline, whose nature seemed to most of her contemporaries emotional to the point of licentiousness, shows in the analysis of members of her own family a dispassionate intellectuality comparable to that of Novalis.⁴ Hölderlin, the ethereal dreamer, was capable of amazing self-diagnosis: no biographer has ever summed up Hölderlin’s personal and poetical character, in its strength and weakness, so objectively, so concisely and clearly, as the poet himself in a letter to his friend Neuffer.⁵

The literary character of the early Romanticists, like that of Heinrich von Kleist, is distinguished by a duality of rational and irrational qualities.⁶ The great intellectual and emotional forces of the 18th century converge in these men; they are the heirs of both "Aufklärung" and "Sturm und Drang." Herder had taught them respect for the irrational; Kant had convinced them of the sovereignty of reason. They never questioned the validity of the instinctive and unconscious, yet they never denied the intellect rights of entry and search in these precincts. They wanted to feel, but they also wanted to analyze their feelings and become conscious of the subconscious. The creed of the "Sturm und Drang": "Gefühl ist alles, Name ist Schall und Rauch," was not theirs, and unlike Goethe's Faust they were in no danger of despising "Vernunft und Wissenschaft, des Menschen allerhöchste Kraft." This dualism of rationality and irrationality is the blessing and the curse of that entire age of private, emotional culture and philosophical and scientific progress. Not only Kleist, but his whole generation was agitated by the conflict of head and heart and engaged in endless striving for the harmony and unity of consciousness which they saw ideally represented by such persons as Caroline or Ludwig von Brockes.⁷ This conflict was not unknown to the German Classicists: there are periods in Goethe's life when his inherent irrationality became predominant;

and Schiller, spiritually so near a kinsman of the Romanticists, strove heroically to reconcile in poetry and philosophy the antithetical powers of his nature. The author of the treatise on naïve and sentimental poetry, no less than the contemplator of the marionettes, had moments when he cursed his prerogative of reason and craved the involuntary quietism of unintelligence.⁸ That this duality of rational and irrational endowment was an impediment to poetic production, Schiller and Kleist both testify.⁹ The early Romantic poets aspired to be philosophers, and the philosophers poets; the characteristic philosophy of the time was the aesthetic metaphysics of Schelling, the poet-philosopher, who attracted Goethe as well as the Romanticists. In fact both Classicists and Romanticists were persuaded of the essential unity of art and philosophy. It is significant that philosophers, of poetic and artistic temper, were the leaders of the age, and that Berlin, the stronghold of 18th-century Rationalism, could become the cradle of Romanticism. Novalis said: "Die Trennung von Poet und Denker ist nur scheinbar und zum Nachteil beider. Es ist ein Zeichen einer Krankheit und einer krankhaften Konstitution."¹⁰ Novalis himself exemplified to Friedrich Schlegel the ideal combination of these two.¹¹ And the golden age of German poetry, which the early Romanticists believed to be at hand, was to be marked by intimate connection of thought and imagination: "Philo-

sophie und Poesie, die höchsten Kräfte des Menschen, die selbst zu Athen jede für sich in der höchsten Blüte doch nur einzeln wirkten, greifen nun ineinander, um sich in ewiger Wechselwirkung gegenseitig zu beleben und zu bilden.”¹²

This duality is one of the most perplexing problems of Kleist's life and works. Again and again he debates, in epic and drama and essay, the question of thinking and feeling, of the conscious and the unconscious, and his personages are endowed with his own rational and irrational character. Even in the premature placidity of his rationalistic youth he is troubled by this antithesis, and it appears again at the close of his life.¹³ The two thinkers who impressed him most profoundly were Kant and Rousseau, the spokesmen of the rational and the irrational forces of the age, and it is characteristic both of Kleist and of his generation that he should have undertaken to unite their antipodal philosophies. Kant's effect on Kleist in particular is not essentially different from that on Kleist's contemporaries: Kant destroyed the autocracy of reason and opened the doors to the irrational side of life, that “Nachtseite” which Romanticism so assiduously cultivated.

Kleist's catastrophic experience with Kant did not deaden his metaphysical longing; it cured him of the narrow rationalism of Wünsch, but left him that idealistic rationality which we find in Novalis and the young Friedrich Schlegel. It gave him, in

addition to this, a new sense for the irrational, the emotional, and the mysterious; it made him a poet of the type of the early Romanticists.

The Romantic conception of music, likewise, is compact of reason and feeling. "Liebe denkt in süßen Tönen, denn Gedanken stehn zu fern," declares Ludwig Tieck in lines which have acquired a semblance of authority through being frequently quoted. It would seem at first glance that Kleist, too, regarded music as a purely emotional art, injuriously affected by thought.¹⁴ And in fact he speaks of the predominantly feminine nature of music as a reason why the nuns in his story *Die heilige Cäcilie oder die Gewalt der Musik* are so adept in its performance. In their execution, however, he commends not only feeling, but precision and intelligence.¹⁵ And in his famous allusion to the relation of music and poetry, one is struck again by his emphasis on the structural, rational element: music is for him the algebraic formula for all other arts, and in counterpoint he expects to find most important revelations as to the nature of poetry.¹⁶ Similarly Wackenroder, who has been pictured as the archetype of the emotional, anti-intellectual Romantic visionary, prized most highly in his favorite art a combination of emotional and intellectual qualities. In his essay *Wesen der Tonkunst* he speaks of those who reduce music to a mechanism of rational relations and of those who have only fantasy and feeling, but no technical skill.

“Wenn aber die gute Natur die getrennten Kunstseelen in *eine* Hülle vereinigt, wenn das Gefühl des Hörenden noch glühender im Herzen des tiefgelehrten Kunstmeisters brannte, und er die tiefsinnige Wissenschaft in diesen Flammen schmelzt, dann geht ein unnennbar-köstliches Werk hervor, worin Gefühl und Wissenschaft so fest und unzertrennlich ineinander hangen, wie in einem Schmelzgemälde Stein und Farben verkörpert sind.”¹⁷ In the most feminine of the arts, then,—certainly the most subjective,—Kleist and the early Romanticists alike find abundant room for reason.

III

Early and Later Romanticism

THE varying combination of rationality and irrationality is one of the chief grounds for differentiating early from later Romanticism. Early Romanticism contains not only a large emotional element, but also a much larger element of reason and form than has generally been acknowledged; in fact, as we have seen, the peculiar balance of these two factors determines its literary character, as it does that of Heinrich von Kleist. In the further progress of the movement, however, this balance is upset by an increasing emphasis on the irrational and on formlessness. Thus later Romanticism swings back again toward the "Sturm und Drang" and obliterates the boundaries which the early Romanticists had sharply drawn. With the weakening of the control of reason and formal discipline, the vague, fantastic, and emotional pervades Romantic literature more and more, and robust intellectuality gives place to mystic religiosity and reaction.

It is sometimes said of Kleist that he has some Romantic traits but is not a real Romanticist; with equal accuracy, or inaccuracy, it could be said of early Romanticism that it has some Romantic

traits but is not real Romanticism. Such superficial appraisals suffer from the common fault of false definition; they derive their criterion from late Romanticism and simply prove that early Romanticism is not what it did not intend to be. The very element of Classicism which makes the early Romanticists and Kleist appear un-Romantic from this point of view constitutes their historical character and importance. It would mean an appreciable advance toward an understanding of the complex Romantic movement if the necessary distinction were once definitely made between the primary and the secondary, the essential and the unessential in its doctrine and its productions. It is time one ceased to speak of Romanticism as though it were a consistent unit, as though "Romantic" had the same meaning whether applied to Wackenroder or to Uhland, to Novalis or to Eichendorff, to Friedrich Schlegel or to Arnim. It is hardly possible, as Lovejoy has pointed out, to speak of "Romanticism" except in the plural or with the indefinite article.¹

The difficulty is that the current conception of Romanticism is based, not on early Romantic theory, but on late Romantic practice; not on the thought of Friedrich Schlegel or even the poetry of Novalis, but on the writings of Tieck, Brentano, and Hoffmann. The initial group of Romanticists centering at Jena possessed one original theorist and one original poet: Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis.

August Wilhelm Schlegel was not a Romanticist at heart, but a skilful lecturer who popularized and disseminated the Romantic ideas that originated chiefly in his brother's profound and fertile brain. Tieck was a born actor, who with fine adaptability played a Romantic rôle during one period of his varied career.² Tieck is by no means the representative early Romanticist, and was not so regarded by his associates; he did not have a determinative influence on the early movement; he was ever suggestible, a follower rather than a leader; his works have signified the Romantic in the popular estimation, but they are in truth only reflections, and often distorting reflections, of the inner Romantic fire. Friedrich Schlegel describes him as a vague dreamer, lean of body and soul, rather quick and slovenly in composition, and is horrified at the proposal of entrusting to him the completion of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*.³ Novalis himself had recognized the shortcomings of Tieck's "flache Poesie."⁴

Though associated with the earliest Romantic group, Tieck belongs in literary character rather with the later Romanticists. One needs only to compare, quite externally, the writings of Arnim and Brentano, Fouqué or Zacharias Werner or Hoffmann, with those of their predecessors to realize that not the succinct, aphoristic young Friedrich Schlegel or the simple, crystalline Novalis, but Tieck, the man of frail fancy and misty prolixity,

was the literary progenitor of late Romanticism. Yet writers on Romanticism draw again and again on Tieck for their opinions of the whole movement. Even in such a fine interpretation as that of Ricarda Huch we find, consequently, such statements as "Sie [i.e., die Romantiker] haben nie eine feste Überzeugung, es ist ihnen niemals ganz ernst"; or, "der romantische Mensch ist faul und stolz auf seine Faulheit."⁵ The chapter which she entitles *Der romantische Charakter* should be headed *Der Charakter Ludwig Tiecks*; Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis did not cultivate "die süsse Schwermut," the emotional self-indulgence and morbid self-absorption of which she finds so many evidences in Tieck. To Friedrich Schlegel, the subjective Rousseau seemed pathological, and Goethe's Tasso "ein verzärtelter Virtuose."⁶

Romanticism in its early stages was positive, progressive, and youthful; it looked forward with confident optimism to a new age, to a new art, philosophy, and religion. In its later stages it was old, resigned, and reactionary, seeking refuge in the realms of weird fantasy and medieval Catholicism. This decline is to be explained in part by the very loftiness of the ideals held by the early Romanticists: like the author of *Robert Guiskard* they aimed at nothing less than a new form of German poetic style. In their essential aim they, like Kleist, never achieved popularity; by the tragic irony of literary history they are known to the pub-

lic to-day in terms of their less essential and their later productions.

The failure of Romanticism is due in some degree to germs of decay latent in the movement from its inception, such as the medievalism of Wackenroder. But had Friedrich Schlegel been gifted with a power of poetic productivity commensurate with his critical faculty, or had Novalis lived longer, the outcome would have been different. Mysticism, weariness, and reaction, however, were inevitable concomitants of a period of national calamity such as Germany passed through at the beginning of the 19th century. The inaugurators of Romanticism, like Heinrich von Kleist, found themselves out of joint with their times: what the country demanded was not a new style of poetry, but men like Arnim to distribute patriotic rhymes to soldiers passing through the market-places. It seemed to A. W. Schlegel that poetry must be entirely replaced by oratory.⁷ The poet of *Guiskard* had to yield to the writer of *Die Hermannsschlacht*; the conservatory poetry of Heidelberg and Swabia was only a faint echo of the ideals of the *Athenäum*.

The end of the 18th century in German literature is marked, not by the first meeting of the Romantics in Berlin in 1797 or the launching of their periodical in 1798, but rather by the collapse of Prussia at Jena in 1806 or the appearance of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* in 1807: a great national exigency and a new collectivistic philosophy ring the knell of the aesthetic individu-

alism of Classicism and early Romanticism; the humanistic ideal is replaced by the national. Goethe, who remained loyal to the cosmopolitan ideals of the 18th century, now found himself truly and for the first time in a world apart from the younger generation.

More precisely, the dividing line might be drawn at 1802, when Friedrich Schlegel left Jena for Paris; for the next six years he is in a period of transition which ends in 1808 with his conversion to Catholicism.⁸ The young Friedrich Schlegel was not vague and was anything but lazy: he was a man of extraordinary mental energy who thought vigorously to definite conclusions and who accomplished before his thirtieth year a prodigious amount of hard work. Little in common with this youth had the Viennese diplomat of ten years later, the travelling-companion of Metternich and member of a papal order, who found it convenient to renew the family patent of nobility. Though he longed at times to exchange his "silk and diplomacy" for "sackcloth and freedom," he had grown too fat of body and soul ever to regain his liberty. In 1802, had he then known Heinrich von Kleist, he must have welcomed him as a brother in arms; in 1811 the editor of Metternich's *Österreichischer Beobachter* dismissed Kleist's death as "ein Ereignis . . . welches neuerdings beweist, auf welche Verirrungen und Abwege der Mensch durch Vergessenheit und Hintansetzung alles höheren Glaubens geraten kann."⁹

IV

Form and Discipline

ACCORDING to the traditional conception, Romanticism differs from Classicism and from the artistry of Kleist in being indefinite, formless, and hostile to form. It is easy enough to find illustrations for this view in the writings of Tieck, Brentano, and the lesser and later Romanticists. It would be extremely difficult, however, to corroborate it from the lyrics of Novalis, who is, after all, the only productive poetic genius among the Romanticists of Jena, or even from the rhapsodies of Wackenroder. Friedrich Schlegel, to be sure, had no business to try to write a novel, but the form of *Lucinde* is no less calculated than that of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. The latter was deliberately planned as a coalescence of novel and "Märchen"¹ and illustrates its author's dictum: "Die Schreibart des Romans muss kein Kontinuum, es muss ein in jedem Perioden gegliederter Bau sein. Jedes kleine Stück muss etwas Abgeschnittenes, Begrenztes, ein eignes Ganze sein."² Whatever their shortcomings in production, the early Romanticists cherished ideals of literary form as definite as those of the Classicists, though by no means identical with them. They were convinced

of the applicability of reason to art;³ they recognized the cosmic laws of poetry⁴ and the need of self-restriction.⁵ Fichte, the rigorous ethical philosopher, the man of discipline and deed, and August Wilhelm Schlegel, one of the strictest metricists in all German literature, elegant, correct, and formal in every detail of his life, represent a side of Romanticism that is too often overlooked.

Novalis believed that poets, musicians, and painters could learn much from each other in the way of technique, but only within the limitations of their respective arts.⁶ Friedrich Schlegel considered it as futile to attempt to mingle the forms of poetry as it was to confound the varieties of religion.⁷ He, whose daring theory was not moderated by poetic productivity, and who was sometimes willing to grant in the abstract an ideal of form so inclusive as to be formless, nevertheless justified the segregation of poetic *genres*: "Doch sehe ich ein, dass es für jeden Virtuosen durchaus notwendig ist, sich selbst auf einen durchaus bestimmten Zweck zu beschränken; und in der historischen Nachforschung komme ich auf mehre ursprüngliche Formen, die sich nicht mehr ineinander auflösen lassen.... Und ich wünsche nichts mehr, als dass ein Künstler jede dieser Arten verjüngen möge, indem er sie auf ihren ursprünglichen Charakter zurückführt."⁸

In the same essay, the famous *Symposium on Poetry*, occur these sentences: "Ohne Absonde-

rung findet keine Bildung statt, und Bildung ist das Wesen der Kunst." "Die innere Vorstellung kann nur durch die Darstellung nach aussen sich selbst klarer und ganz lebendig werden. Und Darstellung ist Sache der Kunst, man stelle sich wie man auch wolle."⁹ One is reminded of Kleist's pronouncement: "In der Kunst kommt es überall auf die Form an, und alles, was eine Gestalt hat, ist meine Sache,"¹⁰ and of another utterance of Schlegel's: "Der Künstler . . . kann nur bilden, nichts als bilden."¹¹ In *Werther*, one of the most Romantic of Goethe's works, the Romanticists admire "die reine Absonderung von allem Zufälligen in der Darstellung, die gerade und sicher auf ihr Ziel und auf das Wesentliche geht."¹²

"Das Wesentliche," declares a member of the symposium, "sind die bestimmten Zwecke, die Absonderung wodurch allein das Kunstwerk Umriss erhält und in sich selbst vollendet wird. Die Fantasie des Dichters soll sich nicht in eine chaotische Überhauptpoesie ergiessen, sondern jedes Werk soll der Form und der Gattung nach einen durchaus bestimmten Charakter haben."¹³ Thereupon the feasibility of a school of poetry is discussed, after the fashion of artisans' apprenticeship or the schools of "Meistersgesang."¹⁴ For the Romanticists of this early group were not afraid to apply to the poet the analogy of the craftsman who works with sure tools to a definite end,¹⁵ or even the analogy of the factory: "Man glaubt

Autoren oft durch Vergleichungen mit dem Fabrikwesen zu schmähen. Aber . . . wie sehr wäre manchem Pfuscher nur ein geringer Teil von dem Fleiss und der Sorgfalt zu wünschen, die wir an den gemeinsten Werkzeugen kaum noch achten!”¹⁶ Hölderlin tells us: “Der modernen Poesie fehlt es aber besonders an der Schule und am Handwerksmässigen, dass nämlich ihre Verfahrungsart berechnet und gelehrt, und wenn sie gelernt ist, in der Ausübung immer zuverlässig wiederholt werden kann. . . . Deswegen und aus höheren Gründen bedarf die Poesie besonders sicherer und charakteristischer Prinzipien und Schranken.”¹⁷ Kleist thinks he has discovered “the algebraic formula” of art;¹⁸ Hölderlin speaks, in terms equally mathematical, of “the lawful calculus” of poetry.¹⁹

Novalis is no less firm in his requirement of form and unity in art: “Wenn man weiss, welche Klasse dieser verschiedenen Darstellungen der Dichter gewählt hat, so muss sich alles [in seinem Werk] aus diesem Begriff deduzieren und rechtfertigen lassen. Einheit muss jede Darstellung haben, wenn sie eine Darstellung, ein Ganzes sein will, und nicht etwa aus Prinzip im Grossen gestaltlos und nur im einzelnen poetisch gestaltet sein will. Dann aber ist sie auch insofern kein Kunstwerk, sondern nur ein Sack voll Kunstfragmente. Je grösser der Dichter ist, desto weniger Freiheit erlaubt er sich.”²⁰ The idea of the whole, says the author of *Ofterdingen*, must govern and control a work of art from first to last,

and Wieland, Jean Paul, and others are to be criticized for the superficial and unessential elements in their planless works.²¹ Thus does the subjective Wackenroder define poetry: "Das *Verdichten* der im wirklichen Leben verloren umherirrenden Gefühle in mannigfaltige, feste Massen ist das Wesen aller Dichtung; sie trennt das Vereinte, vereint fest das Getrennte, und in den engeren, schärferen Grenzen schlagen höhere, empörte Wellen. Und wo sind die Grenzen und Sprünge schärfer, wo schlagen die Wellen höher, als in der Tonkunst?"²² To Friedrich Schlegel architecture, the most structural of the arts, seemed the loftiest and the most uncomprehended.²³

The early Romanticists' conception of art was not that of a diffuse, uncritical reproduction of the breadth of life or their own subjective states; they knew that artistic production requires limitation, concentration, and intensification. Their view was not essentially different from that of Goethe and Schiller: Goethe's dictum, "In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister," is identical in purport with Novalis': "Für den Dichter ist die Poesie an beschränkte Werkzeuge gebunden, und eben dadurch wird sie zur Kunst."²⁴ Their ideal was a form of art that should combine classical sharpness of outline with Romantic depth and infinitude.²⁵ Not only to the young Graecist Friedrich Schlegel, but also to the editor of the *Athenäum*, the drama seemed the highest form of poetic

art.²⁶ The fragment, such a favorite with these Romanticists, is an example of compact form, not of formlessness; they wrote fragments not because they could construct nothing larger, but because this mold best suited their intent; "aphorism" would be a better translation than "fragment." "Ein Fragment," says Friedrich Schlegel, "muss gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel."²⁷ It is not an accident that one of this Romantic circle, A. W. Schlegel, could give advice on classical metres to Goethe, the greatest Classicist, or that Romantic poetry was bound with rhyme, or that the Romanticists especially cultivated and popularized the sonnet, one of the tersest and most finely organized, one of the strictest of all literary forms.

"Um über einen Gegenstand gut schreiben zu können," writes the young contributor to the *Lyceum der schönen Künste* in 1797, "muss man sich nicht mehr für ihn interessieren. . . . So lange der Künstler erfindet und begeistert ist, befindet er sich für die Mitteilung wenigstens in einem illiberalen Zustande. Er wird dann alles sagen wollen. . . . Dadurch verkennt er den Wert und die Würde der Selbstbeschränkung, die doch für den Künstler wie für den Menschen das Erste und Letzte, das Notwendigste und das Höchste ist."²⁸ In their conception of poetic genius and the process of its production, the early Romanticists differed

decidedly from the "Sturm und Drang," whereas the later Romanticists drew near again to the doctrine of the unconscious, irrational "Naturgenie." The "Stürmer und Dränger" relegated creation to the obscure domain of instinct, and loathed the intercession of thought; the early Romanticist was eager to shed the light of conscious reason down these subterranean passages, to illuminate and master the subconscious. "Alles soll aus uns heraus und sichtbar werden, unsre Seele soll repräsentabel werden," says Novalis.²⁹ Heinrich von Kleist, in whom there is something of the "Stürmer und Dränger," laments, at times, the destruction of unconsciousness by the intrusion of the intellect; but in his essay on the marionettes, unconsciousness is only the first stage of human development, and the last and highest is the condition of infinite consciousness. Neither Kleist, nor the early Romanticists, nor Schiller, in spite of occasional doubts, would sacrifice the sovereignty of the rational over the irrational side of their dual natures. They are conscious artists, and could not, if they would, relapse into the primitivity of instinct. The attitude of the "Sturm und Drang," says Friedrich Schlegel, is a thing of the past: "Die Geschichte von den Gergesener Säuen ist wohl eine sinnbildliche Prophezeiung von der Periode der Kraftgenies, die sich nun glücklich in das Meer der Vergessenheit gestürzt haben."³⁰

Shakespeare had seemed to the poets of the 1770's the very type of intuitive, unrestrained "natural genius," creating unconsciously, as in a dream; to the first Romanticists he appeared as the acme of conscious and self-governing artistry. Herein again they were nearer to the position of the Classical Goethe than that of the author of the *Rede zum Shakespearestag*. And in the Romantic temple of art, not only the "divine" Raphael was admired, but also the versatile Leonardo da Vinci, the artist-scientist, who fulfilled the requirements of his art with the strictness of science.³¹

Novalis was a conscious artificer in poetry, and stressed repeatedly the need of literary schooling and self-discipline: "Man muss als Schriftsteller alle Arten der Darstellung machen können. Erst lerne man sie genau kennen, untersuche sie sorgfältig, studiere die besten schon vorhandenen Muster, dann lege man Hand ans Werk. Allmählich wird man in jeder Art Meister."³² "Ich bin überzeugt," he declares in another of his fragments, "dass man durch kalten, technischen Verstand und ruhigen, moralischen Sinn eher zu wahren Offenbarungen gelangt, als durch Phantasie, die uns bloss ins Gespensterreich, diesen Antipoden des wahren Himmels, zu leiten scheint."³³ Such declarations remind us of Kleist's "Auch muss ich mich im Mechanischen verbessern, an Übung zunehmen, und in kürzerer Zeit Besseres liefern lernen;"³⁴ or Friedrich Schlegel's

"Je mehr die Poesie Wissenschaft wird, je mehr wird sie auch Kunst."³⁵ Novalis defined imagination as the power of plastic representation,³⁶ and regarded technical talent as half of genius.³⁷ Some of his maxims could find a place in a program of realism: "Sorgfältiges Studium des Lebens macht den Romantiker, wie sorgfältiges Studium von Farbe, Gestaltung, Ton und Kraft den Maler, Musiker und Mechaniker."³⁸ And in truth there is more than a germ of realism in the early Romantic attitude toward art and nature.

In *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Klingsohr, the master, thus advises Heinrich, the poet-aspirant: "Ich kann Euch nicht genug anrühmen, Euren Verstand, Euren natürlichen Trieb zu wissen . . . mit Fleiss und Mühe zu unterstützen. Nichts ist dem Dichter unentbehrlicher, als Einsicht in die Natur jedes Geschäfts, Bekanntschaft mit den Mitteln jeden Zweck zu erreichen, und Gegenwart des Geistes, nach Zeit und Umständen die schicklichsten zu wählen. Begeisterung ohne Verstand ist unnütz und gefährlich. . . . Und so ist auch die kühle, belebende Wärme eines dichterischen Gemüts gerade das Widerspiel von jener wilden Hitze eines kränklichen Herzens. . . . Der junge Dichter kann nicht kühl, nicht besonnen genug sein. . . . Die Poesie will vorzüglich . . . als strenge Kunst getrieben werden."³⁹ And when the aged poet tells his pupil "Der Stoff ist nicht der Zweck der Kunst, aber die Ausführung ist es,"⁴⁰ he is speak-

ing in the spirit and almost in the words of Heinrich von Kleist: "Der Stoff [des Guiskard] ist, mit den Leuten zu reden, noch ungeheurer; doch in der Kunst kommt es überall auf die Form an."⁴¹

Romantic criticism is usually thought of as being merely relative, receptive, and sympathetic; but that is only half its character, as the irrational is only half of the early Romantic character. In the course of one of the finest of all Romantic reviews, that of *Wilhelm Meister* by Friedrich Schlegel, we read: "Es ist schön und notwendig, sich dem Eindruck eines Gedichtes ganz hinzugeben, den Künstler mit uns machen zu lassen, was er will, und etwa nur im Einzelnen das Gefühl durch Reflexion zu bestätigen und zum Gedanken zu erheben.... Aber nicht minder notwendig ist es, von allem Einzelnen abstrahieren zu können, das Allgemeine schwebend zu fassen, eine Masse zu überschauen, und das Ganze festzuhalten, selbst dem Verborgensten nachzuforschen und das Entlegenste zu verbinden. Wir müssen uns über unsre eigne Liebe erheben, und, was wir anbeten, in Gedanken vernichten können." The Romantic critic wishes not only to breathe the fragrance of a flower, but to examine its construction; not only to contemplate the fair exterior of the earth but to investigate its interior, to learn, like Faust, "Was die Welt im Innersten zusammenhält," and probe with scientific curiosity into the heart of the poet's mystery.⁴² To the young Romanticists, the emo-

tional, uncritical attitude generally ascribed to them seemed absurd: "Wenn manche mystische Kunstliebhaber, welche jede Kritik für Zergliederung und jede Zergliederung für Zerstörung des Genusses halten, konsequent dächten: so wäre 'Potztausend' das beste Kunsturteil über das würdigste Werk."⁴³ "Wir können nicht charakterisieren, ohne dass darin auf gewisse Weise ein Urteil enthalten wäre."⁴⁴

The merciless criticism which the Romanticists exercised not only on others but on themselves is alone adequate defense against the charge of supine subjectivity: the pages of the *Athenäum* are strewn with the corpses of annihilated mediocrity.⁴⁵ They did not take their standards of judgment from the individual work, but from the best models of ancient and German classicism. They were as intolerant of formlessness and presumptuous impotence as ever Lessing had been, Friedrich Schlegel's mentor and oracle.⁴⁶ Even the gentle, retiring Wackenroder did not let fond friendship blind his critical eye to Tieck's literary faults: with astounding clarity he discerned in Tieck's youthful works hasty facility of production, prolixity and lack of concentration, artificiality, wayward fancy, and the toleration of bulk and inferiority for the sake of single "schöne Stellen"—in short, all those vices through which Tieck helped to bring the word "Romantic" into disrepute.⁴⁷

V

Classicists and Romanticists

EARLY German Romanticism was not and did not consider itself to be the antithesis of German Classicism, and it was not so considered by its time. History, literary and other, does not advance by such leaps; in order to reach anything like an antithesis to early Romanticism, one must go as far as Young Germany: not Goethe and Schiller, nor even Fouqué and Hoffmann, but Börne and Gutzkow are the antipodes of the men of Jena. The "emancipated" journalists who discarded Goethe had no more respect for his Romantic admirers. The interrelations of Classicism and Early Romanticism, however, are so close and manifold that one might call the Schlegels and Novalis, like Kleist, Neo-Classicalists, were one not loath to attach a new label to a period of German literature our comprehension of which has suffered, more than that of any other, from hasty and arbitrary labelling. The early Romanticists, like Heinrich von Kleist, were conscious of being the heirs of German Classicism, and aspired to be its consummators; even where they opposed the Classicists, it was with the yearning to conquer and be conquered, it was with the loving hostility of Pen-

thesilea toward Achilles. Goethe, the only full-fledged German Classicist, and that only within a limited period of his life, was the model, but by no means the final ideal, of the early Romanticists; they wanted to supplement and perfect his art by the rehabilitation of elements through the sacrifice of which he had won his austere but restricted classicality.

One is too apt to judge the relations of Classicism and Romanticism from the angle of the present day. We see the works of all these men in their historical completeness, and fail to gain the necessary contemporary point of view. "Classicism" had for the first Romanticists not at all the significance which it has for the present student of German literature, and it is a violent anachronism to apply it in its modern meaning to the conditions of more than a century ago. To the younger generation at the close of the 18th century, Goethe and Schiller were not historical, complete, and unsurpassable, but imperfect contemporaries, striving, like themselves, toward a new pinnacle of poetic art. One fails to find in the actual utterances of the early Romanticists any such consciousness of difference from the Classicists as modern writers have imputed to them. It never occurred to them to call themselves "Romanticists" in contradistinction to any other literary faction; as a matter of fact, it was only their later opponents who imposed this designation on them.¹ The "problem" of the

antithesis of German Classicism and Romanticism is largely a product of the subjectivity of subsequent partisans and historians of literature.

The terms "klassisch" and "romantisch," when they occur in writings of the time, require critical scrutiny: the former signifies to Friedrich Schlegel invariably ancient classicism; and the remark that is often quoted against him, "Alle klassischen Dichtarten in ihrer strengen Reinheit sind jetzt lächerlich,"² does not, of course, ridicule what we call the Classicism of Weimar, but asserts that the ancient purity of literary *genres* cannot be maintained in modern literature, an assertion which could be amply supported from the works of Goethe and Schiller themselves, and which Schiller justified expressly in the following words: "Der sentimentalische Dichter geht in zu wesentlichen Stücken von dem naiven ab, als dass ihm die Formen, welche dieser eingeführt, überall ungezwungen anpassen könnten. . . . So viel lehrt doch die Erfahrung, dass unter den Händen der sentimentalischen Dichter (auch der vorzüglichsten) keine einzige Dichtart ganz das geblieben ist, was sie bei den Alten gewesen, und dass unter den alten Namen öfters sehr neue Gattungen sind ausgeführt worden."³ Even Hölderlin, the devoted lover and reviver of Greek forms, makes this concession: "Es ist eben keine andere Wahl; so wie wir irgend einen Stoff behandeln, der nur ein wenig modern ist, so müssen wir, nach meiner Überzeu-

gung, die alten klassischen Formen verlassen, die so innig ihrem Stoffe angepasst sind, dass sie für keinen andern taugen.”⁴

The term “romantisch,” on the other hand, is used by Friedrich Schlegel especially of Cervantes, of Shakespeare, “the peak of modern poetry,”⁵ of Dante, “the holy founder and father of modern poetry,” of Petrarch and Boccaccio; the last three being the “leaders of antique style in modern art.”⁶ “Da suche und finde ich das Romantische,” he says in the *Symposium on Poetry*, “bei den ältern Modernen, bei Shakespeare, Cervantes, in der italienischen Poesie, in jenem Zeitalter der Ritter, der Liebe und der Märchen, aus welchem die Sache und das Wort selbst herstammt. Dieses ist bis jetzt das einzige, was einen Gegensatz zu den klassischen Dichtungen des Altertums abgeben kann.”⁷ The contrast in the writer’s mind, thus plainly stated, is one between ancient classicism on the one hand and medieval-modern European literature on the other; for the authors just mentioned and those of his own age, constituting together “die moderne romantische Zeit,” Schlegel did indeed regard as the opposite of classical antiquity.⁸ But German Classicists and Romanticists are mentioned side by side in the *Athenäum*, and even in the later *Phöbus*, with no suggestion of incompatibility; the antithesis of the time in Germany, as Adam Heinrich Müller sees it, is between “Aufklärung” and “Romantik.”⁹

HUMANISM

The noble conception of humanity which inspired the poetry of Goethe and Schiller was no less the ideal of the founders of Romanticism. The entire Classic-Romantic period is characterized by an idealistic humanism and culture of personality which reaches its highest point in the individualism of early Romanticism. In this respect also, the first phase of Romanticism is the culmination of a movement of the 18th century; the 19th century had advanced several years before this humanistic development was interrupted by national calamity; and only thereafter did the new era begin in philosophy and literature.

The refinement of the individual personality, the achievement of harmonious, complete humanity was the chief interest of this age; "Totalität," "vollkommene Menschheit" were its creed, a creed which Herder and the young Goethe had learned from Hamann. Classicists and Romantics, though they opposed with equal determination the utilitarianism of Nicolai, did not themselves regard literature as an absolute art. "Die Seele meiner Lehre," writes the young Friedrich Schlegel, "ist, dass die Menschheit das Höchste ist, und die Kunst nur um ihretwillen vorhanden sei."¹⁰ The reuniting of all man's disparate powers appears to him to be the most vital and most immediate concern of the human race.¹¹ It was the

problem of the time, treated not only by Herder, but by Schiller (in the *Letters on Aesthetic Education* or the treatise *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*), by Kleist (in the essay *On the Marionettes*), and by the Romantic philosophers from Hemsterhuis to Schelling. It is the central theme of Hölderlin's *Empedokles*, the hero of which was conceived from the beginning as "ein Todfeind aller einseitigen Existenz."¹²

The early Romanticists, like the Classicists, aspired to the development and reconciliation of all the human faculties;¹³ they were convinced, like Goethe, of the saving powers of personality. It was their ideal of complete humanity which made them turn toward the "universal" Goethe and away from Schiller, whom they considered one-sidedly rational; which made them averse to the mere rationalism of the "Aufklärung" and the mere emotionalism of the "Sturm und Drang" and eager to effect a synthesis of these two movements. They opposed overdeveloped masculinity and exaggerated femininity and subordinated the ideal of sex to the ideal of pure humanity: "Die Weiblichkeit soll wie die Männlichkeit zur höheren Menschlichkeit gereinigt werden," was the demand of the young classicist Friedrich Schlegel,¹⁴ and it was reiterated by the editor of the *Athenäum*.¹⁵ One of the chief reasons why the Romanticists, like Goethe, gave such a high place to woman was because they saw in her the more perfect repre-

sentative of humanity;¹⁶ and from the height of this recognition they ridiculed the limited conception of woman's sphere contained in Schiller's *Würde der Frauen*.

Hence their enthusiasm, like Kleist's, for "Bildung," a concept virtually religious, and only approximately translatable by "education." "Bildung" is the highest good of humanity, and its essence and aim is "die harmonische Fülle der Menschheit."¹⁷ It was this ideal of unified and complete humanity which inspired the "Erziehungsroman" of Classicism and Romanticism, and which appeared to Friedrich Schlegel the only adequate counterweight to revolutionary materialism.¹⁸ It was this ideal, which they had inherited from Classicism and had seen embodied in Goethe, that made the Romanticists subsequently turn against him; as early as 1800 Friedrich Schlegel observes in his notebook: "In Goethes Werken keine Einheit, keine Ganzheit; nur hie und da ein Ansatz dazu," and this criticism henceforth is a constant factor in his judgments of Goethe.¹⁹ Similarly Novalis turned away from the author of *Wilhelm Meister*, who seemed to him to have forsaken his own ideal, denying one side of human nature in order to exalt another.

Even the patriotism of the Romanticists is informed by this humanitarian doctrine. Heinrich von Kleist bases his plea for the preservation of Germany in the last instance on her services to

human culture and the belief that she has preserved the ideal of humanity purer than has any other nation.²⁰ Fichte in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* takes the same position; ²¹ the new education which he proposes for the salvation of Germany is described as "die Kunst, den ganzen Menschen durchaus und vollständig zum Menschen zu bilden";²² it aims at the complete development of the individual (9. Rede), at a new moral refinement of mankind which is to be imparted to other races and times (12. Rede). "Nur diejenige Nation, welche zuvörderst die Aufgabe der Erziehung zum vollkommenen Menschen . . . gelöst haben wird, wird sodann auch jene des vollkommenen Staates lösen."²³ The early Romantic conception of the state is steeped in the humanitarian cosmopolitanism of the 18th century; for these men, love of country is love of humanity.

HELLENISM

"Der erste unter uns, der . . . das Urbild vollen-deter Menschheit in den Gestalten der Kunst und des Altertums erkannte und gottbegeistert verkündigte, war der heilige Winckelmann."²⁴ Thus does the leader of the Romanticists, canonizing the teacher of the Classicists, claim him as his own. Nor did the later Friedrich Schlegel alter this high opinion.²⁵ In fact, he set out to be the Winckelmann of Greek poetry, and he employs Winckelmann's terminology,²⁶ which his brother also de-

fends.²⁷ The early Romanticists, no less than Goethe and Schiller, derived their fundamental poetic principles from the study of the ancient classics; and they considered themselves as differing from Goethe and Schiller only in vindicating the ancient ideal in its completeness against its partial realization in the classicism of Weimar. There is good reason for calling German Romanticism a by-product of the prevalent classicism of the 1790's; for in their desire to define the essence of the ancient art which they revered, Friedrich Schlegel and his associates discovered, and presently came to admire, that "Romantic" art and literature which alone they considered the peer and opposite of the antique.²⁸

They were nurtured in ancient classicism, and regarded the literature of Greece as the supreme embodiment of poetry: "Diese erste Masse hellenischer Dichtkunst . . . das ist die Poesie selbst. Alles, was noch folgt, bis auf unsre Zeiten, ist Überbleibsel, Nachhall, einzelne Ahndung, Annäherung, Rückkehr zu jenem höchsten Olymp der Poesie."²⁹ The utmost they could say in praise of Goethe was to call him a modern Greek; and it was as the restorer of ancient poetry that they celebrated him again and again.³⁰ It was precisely that "graecomania" which Schiller so unjustly ridiculed that led Friedrich Schlegel and hence his brother to appreciate Goethe's poetical genius.³¹ In Friedrich Schlegel's classical essays during his period of

“Graekomanie” and “Objektivitätswut” one can frequently discern the earliest stage in the evolution of Romantic theory. The ideals of completeness of personality, of harmony and perfection, of purity of poetic forms, of the union of individual truth and objective beauty³² continue to be the ideals of early Romanticism to a far greater extent than is generally supposed.

The renaissance of Hellenism in the period from Winckelmann to Schelling is intimately connected with the humanitarian culture of the age. It was Winckelmann who pointed to Greek art as the finest flower of Greek life. Schlegel and Hölderlin, like Goethe and Schiller, saw the realization of their dream of humanity both in the Greek poet and in the human subject whom his art glorified, “so sehr ist die Griechheit nichts anderes als eine höhere, reinere Menschheit.”³³ In the heroes of ancient authors Schlegel found the unique combination of hardness and softness, of strength and charm, of masculinity and femininity, which distinguishes the original Romantic conception of character.³⁴ The early Romanticists and Heinrich von Kleist came to stress especially the passionate, the Dionysian element in ancient human nature, but only as a corrective, only because in their opinion the Classicists of Weimar had incompletely portrayed the human ideal of the Greeks.³⁵

The author of the essay *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* expected from the study of the

Greeks, which had reached an unequalled height in Germany, a complete revolution of poetry and culture,³⁶ and F. A. Wolf, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the poets of Weimar shared his Hellenistic faith.³⁷ The Schlegels desired, no less zealously than Goethe and Schiller, "to modernize the religion of the humane Greeks, which made gods of men."³⁸ The later author of *Pandora* and *Achilleis* recognized a striving kindred to his own in the *Ion* and *Alarcos* which he produced in Weimar; and it is difficult to explain, except on grounds of personal malice, Schiller's refusal to acknowledge the essential unity of his and Friedrich Schlegel's classical principles.

AESTHETIC CULTURE

A highly refined idealistic aestheticism pervades the entire Classic-Romantic period. It is difficult for us today to comprehend how completely an aesthetic philosophy of life dominated the age that followed upon the achievements of Winckelmann, Lessing, and Herder, especially in the younger generation, which inherited not only the philosophy of Kant but some of the classical works of Goethe and Schiller. There is an astonishing solidarity in respect to conduct and to general views of life in this period. As one reads the letters and records of its men and women, one learns, aside from private affairs, of little else than the most abstract and idealistic preoccupations with philosophy and

poetry. Aristotle, Dante, Raphael, or the *Critiques* of Kant were far more real conceptions to the German mind at the beginning of the 19th century than the Holy Roman Empire or Napoleon Bonaparte. A novel and a philosophical treatise—Goethe's *Meister* and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*—seemed to Friedrich Schlegel two of the three great forces of the age, coequal to the French Revolution.³⁹ He himself had developed such a literariness of mind that living seemed to him synonymous with writing.⁴⁰

The intellectual life of these decades moved in a sphere of pure abstractness made possible only by the soaring ideality of contemporary German philosophy. Goethe and Schiller, Novalis and the young Friedrich Schlegel were committed, implicitly and equally, to an aesthetic idealism that had little relation to national realities; the end of this culture came, not in 1800, but in the years of degradation and distress between 1806 and 1813. The early Romanticists, like Goethe and Schiller, were convinced of the conciliatory mission of art in civilization, and hoped to attain their ideal of perfect humanity through aesthetic education. The doctrine that artistic creation is the highest activity of man, and the artist the supreme representative of the race, was carried to its ultimate conclusions by Schelling; but it was the doctrine of Classicism no less than of Romanticism which here reached a philosophical formulation so attractive

to Goethe. The extraordinary aesthetic bias of the age is seen in the confidence with which the youthful Friedrich Schlegel based the whole plan of his life on art,⁴¹ or in Schiller's sublime faith that problems of practical politics could best be solved by aesthetic speculation.⁴²

The Romanticists have often been accused of "Weltflucht," of aloofness from reality; but the accusation can be brought with equal justice against the poets of Weimar. All these men lived and moved in an abstract artistic realm of their own, sequestered from what is ordinarily considered as reality. Under most unusual political and economic conditions there existed in certain localities in Germany at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century an aesthetic-literary culture of remarkable homogeneity. The contributors to *Athenäum* and *Phöbus*, like those to *Die Horen* and *Die Propyläen*, thought and wrote as though the world were an abode of pure philosophy and art; the circle of Jena ignored with an idealism no less lofty than Goethe's and Schiller's "das, was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine." An aesthetic cosmopolitanism was as characteristic of the early Romanticists as of the Classicists: they were enthusiastic for the cultivation of the individual, not of the national patriot; they were not dismayed by the recognition that Germany as a whole was nothing, the individual German everything. Later, Romanticism turned to national interests, but it

was left for Heinrich von Kleist to demonstrate that poetry can be both patriotic and beautiful.

THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION

The ideal of harmonious humanity which inspired the aesthetic creed of the Classic and Romantic age led to a surprisingly unified philosophy or mythology of culture. The notion of an original state of innocence and naïve harmony from which man "fell" or which he sacrificed in the progress of civilization, is the common property of this period, and Rousseau's expression of it is merely the most eloquent; it is found in Novalis and his favorite philosopher Hemsterhuis, in Wieland and Schubert, in Schelling and Schiller and Kleist, and even in the late Romanticist Hoffmann. Only in answer to the question: where this original state was to be found and whether or how it could be regained, did opinions differ. Kleist and Rousseau saw the primal ideal in a prehistoric condition of unconsciousness and absence of culture; Hölderlin and the young Friedrich Schlegel, together with the German Classicists, saw it in the culture of ancient Greece.

But all these men, Schiller and Kleist and the leaders of Romanticism, disagreed fundamentally with that pessimistic interpretation of the further fate of civilization which Rousseau had given; they were convinced of the impossibility of turning the development of the human race backward

to the state of paradisal innocence; and they believed in the final goodness of human culture with an optimism which is one of the best legacies of 18th-century Rationalism.

The author of the essay on the study of Greek poetry had already written in this spirit: "Nichts ist überhaupt einleuchtender, als die Theorie der Perfektibilität. Der reine Satz der Vernunft von der notwendigen unendlichen Vervollkommnung der Menschheit ist ohne alle Schwierigkeit."⁴³ And he did not soon lose this sanguine belief in the endless growth and improvement of the race: "es ist der Menschheit eigen, dass sie sich über die Menschheit erheben muss;"⁴⁴ "hier [in den Künsten und Wissenschaften] ist alles in beständigem Fortschreiten und nichts kann verloren gehen. . . . Hier ist die steigende Vervollkommnung und der natürliche Kreislauf der Bildung nicht etwa eine gutmütige Hoffnung, oder ein wissenschaftlicher Glaubenssatz. . . . Nein, es ist reine *Tatsache*."⁴⁵ Even in Novalis' essay, *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, which is so often quoted as a document of Romantic medievalism and reaction, this hopeful note is heard: "Fortschreitende, immer mehr sich vergrössernde Evolutionen sind der Stoff der Geschichte. Was jetzt nicht die Vollendung erreicht, wird sie bei einem künftigen Versuch erreichen, oder bei einem abermaligen; vergänglich ist nichts, was die Geschichte ergriff; aus unzähligen Verwandlungen geht es in immer reiferen

Gestalten erneuet wieder hervor.”⁴⁶ Just so Herder, contemplating in his profound way the lower forms of nature, had gained from them the comforting assurance “that all transformation is perfection.”⁴⁷

“Das Paradies ist verriegelt und der Cherub hinter uns,” we read in *Über das Marionettentheater*; “wir müssen die Reise um die Welt machen, und sehen, ob es vielleicht von hinten irgendwo wieder offen ist”⁴⁸ — a thought which the nascent poet put into the mouths of his earliest characters.⁴⁹ This voyage round the world is the great journey of humanity from its initial to its final paradise. Kleist and the early Romanticists turned their faces bravely forward on this long trail; it was only later, weary Romanticism that longed to return to the conditions of the middle ages in church and state.

Schiller, before Kleist, had thus formulated the cultural mission of the modern poet: “Er führe uns nicht rückwärts in unsere Kindheit, um uns mit den kostbaren Erwerbungen des Verstandes eine Ruhe erkaufen zu lassen, die nicht länger dauern kann als der Schlaf unsrer Geisteskräfte, sondern führe uns vorwärts zu unsrer Mündigkeit, um uns die höhere Harmonie zu empfinden zu geben, die den Kämpfer belohnet, die den Überwinder beglückt. Er mache sich die Aufgabe einer Idylle, welche . . . den Menschen, der nun einmal nicht mehr nach *Arkadien* zurück kann, bis nach *Ely-*

sium führt.”⁵⁰ The ideas and even the phraseology of Schiller’s *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* are found in Romantic writers like Hülsen, Adam Müller, and Nienstädt.⁵¹ In that essay, Schiller, conceding the importance of the idyll in literature, sees its weakness in the fact that it sets up as irretrievably lost a state of happiness to which it should rather lead us on as to a goal.⁵² Similarly Fichte, in the fifth of his lectures *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* (1794), says: “Vor uns also liegt, was Rousseau unter dem Namen des Naturzustandes und jene Dichter unter der Benennung des goldenen Zeitalters *hinter* uns setzten.”⁵³ And Friedrich Schlegel wrote: “An dem Urbilde der Deutschheit, welches einige grosse vaterländische Erfinder aufgestellt haben, lässt sich nichts tadeln als die falsche Stellung. Diese Deutschheit liegt nicht hinter uns, sondern vor uns.”⁵⁴

Schiller, Kleist, and the Romanticists, recognizing that the advance of man’s civilization had destroyed his primordial harmony, were confident that the continuation of this advance would result in a new and finer harmony on a higher plane. Schiller said: “Sie [i. e., die Dinge der Natur] sind, was wir waren; sie sind, was wir wieder werden sollen. Wir waren Natur wie sie, und unsere Kultur soll uns, auf dem Wege der Vernunft und der Freiheit, zur Natur zurückführen”;⁵⁵ and Novalis was sure that reasoning will lead us ultimately

back to nature.⁵⁶ There is a striking agreement in thought, both in general and in particular, between Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* and Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*. The second article of Friedrich Schlegel's creed for women reads: "Ich glaube an die Macht des Willens und der Bildung, mich dem Unendlichen wieder zu nähern, mich aus den Fesseln der Missbildung zu erlösen."⁵⁷ Kleist realizes that only an increase of reason can free him from the distress into which reason has plunged him.⁵⁸ Anticipating the ideas and the terminology of both Schiller and Kleist, Friedrich Schlegel writes to his brother in 1793: "Sind sie [i. e., der Künstler und sein Beurteiler] so unglücklich, schon einige Begriffe zu haben, so dürfen sie freilich nicht stehen bleiben, und müssen auf einem dornigten Wege fortgehen, der spät aber doch endlich wieder zur Natur zurückführt."⁵⁹

The language of Kleist's remarkable essay, which Erich Schmidt called "einen feinsinnigen Beitrag zur romantischen Ästhetik,"⁶⁰ and which Hanna Hellmann so finely interpreted as the "rune" of Kleist's art,⁶¹ occurs again and again in Novalis' writings: "Mit Instinkt hat der Mensch angefangen, mit Instinkt soll der Mensch endigen. Instinkt ist das Genie im Paradiese, vor der Periode der Selbstabsonderung (Selbsterkenntnis)."⁶² "Wie der Mensch Gott werden wollte, sündigte er."⁶³ "Adam und Eva. Was durch eine Revolution

bewirkt wurde, muss durch eine Revolution aufgehoben werden (Apfelbiss).”⁶⁴ “Die Erkenntnis ist ein Mittel, um wieder zur Nichterkenntnis zu gelangen.”⁶⁵ “Wenn kein Sterblicher . . . den Schleier hebt, so müssen wir Unsterbliche zu werden suchen.”⁶⁶ “Der Übergang von Monotonie zur Harmonie wird freilich durch Disharmonie gehen — und nur am Ende wird eine Harmonie entstehen.”⁶⁷ “Wo gehen wir hin?” is the question in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, and the answer is “Immer nach Hause.”⁶⁸ From the golden age of poetry all things issued, and thither all things must return.⁶⁹ The Romanticists, like Kleist, long to complete the vast circle of this “ringförmige Welt”⁷⁰ and return home; in his “cultural longing” Kleist is one in spirit not only with Schiller, but with Novalis and the early Romanticists.

VI

Romanticists and Classicists

WHEN one studies the interrelations, personal and literary, between the poets of Weimar and those of Jena, one wonders at the ignorance or the temerity of those who first burdened German literary history with the terms "Classic" and "Romantic" and the patience with which subsequent writers have borne the increasing burden. A generation ago, Kuno Francke¹ suggested abolishing these multivocal terms; more recently, the investigations of Lovejoy and of Ullmann and Gotthard² have demonstrated anew the need of doing so; and the present author would be gratified if the results of his study should further this beneficent enterprise.

Romanticism grew up in the immediate vicinity of Classicism, under its very eye and with its aid and encouragement. Jena, the seat of the university in which Goethe and his Duke took such active interest, and at which Schiller preceded Fichte and Schelling; Jena, where Schiller lived until almost to the end of Novalis' life, and whither Goethe came periodically to work in quiet interrupted only by the admiring attentions of the Romantic group; — Jena was connected by a thousand channels of

intellectual intercourse with the neighboring Weimar, the seat of an older but not unbenevolent generation of poets. It was Schiller who drew A. W. Schlegel from his position in Holland to Jena and furnished him a livelihood as a contributor to the *Horen* and the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, thus establishing the literary independence of the man who became the official leader of Romanticism. It was Schiller of whom Novalis sought and obtained important counsel, and Novalis' continued friendliness for the creator of Posa was a bond between Schiller's circle and that of the Romanticists. The Schlegels, on the other hand, were happy to have Goethe ask their advice in matters of versification or classical mythology. Friedrich Schlegel learned much from Goethe, Schiller, and C. G. Körner, and made no secret of the fact.³ He conceived of a synthesis of Goethe's and Fichte's thought as the basis for a new religion,⁴ and the highest praise he could bestow on the religious poems of his friend Novalis, "das Göttlichste, was er je gemacht," was to liken them to Goethe's earlier lyrics.

Goethe thought well of the *Athenäum*, and defended it against Schiller's over-sharp judgment;⁵ he took as friendly an interest in this periodical⁶ as its editors took in his *Propyläen*.⁷ On Goethe's veto a contribution by Schelling and one by Novalis were refused publication in the *Athenäum*.⁸ Caroline writes to Novalis on November 15, 1798:

“Unsere schönen Gemälde⁹ sind noch nicht gedruckt. Ich wollte, sie kämen in die ‘Propyläen’”;¹⁰ in other words, one of the leading members of the first Romantic circle, who, in the same letter, refers to Goethe reverentially as “er,” “das Allerheiligste,” is more than willing to see one of the chief documents of early Romanticism published in the journal of Goethe’s supreme classicism! And that might well have happened, for the Romantics at Jena were in fundamental agreement with the doctrines of the *Propyläen*, and, in fact, their views on art coincided with Goethe’s until the opening years of the 19th century;¹¹ that is, throughout the early Romantic period. It was not the early manifestoes of Romantic theory, but the later consequences thereof that aroused Goethe’s hostility;¹² it was the vagaries of Neo-Catholic and “Nazarene” painting that elicited his scornful comment on “das klosterbrudrisierende, sternbaldisierende Unwesen” (1805).¹³ Goethe announced to Meyer the arrival of A. W. Schlegel in Weimar in the following words: “Wilhelm Schlegel ist nun hier und es ist zu hoffen, dass er einschlägt. Soviel ich habe vernehmen können, ist er in ästhetischen Haupt- und Grundideen mit uns einig.”¹⁴ The elder Schlegel was prized by Schiller as his best contributor to *Die Horen* from their beginning to the end, and collaborated in the *Musenalmanache* for 1798 and 1799; he was thus a faithful helper of Classical periodicals at the very time when he was

launching a supposedly hostile movement! In the second year of the *Athenäum*, so near and so intelligent an observer as Wieland could refer to the Schlegel brothers as "Schildknappen Goethes und Schillers."¹⁵

Schiller seemed destined by personal and poetic character, far more than Goethe, to become the idol and model of the early Romanticists, and they began by admiring and imitating him. He was, like them, a "sentimental," modern poet, a conscious artist; his poetry, like theirs, was one of longing rather than of possession. He had their dualism and the consciousness of it, and he justified their artistic individuality, no less than his own, in his essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*.¹⁶ Like them, and like Kleist, he had a philosophical-poetic endowment which Wilhelm von Humboldt recognized in him as clearly as Friedrich Schlegel saw the same qualities in his friend Novalis.¹⁷ There is no doubt that Schiller's native genius had much in common with that of Schlegel and Novalis; only the mighty will and the self-discipline through which he made himself what he was not by nature, make him appear at times more Classical than Goethe. The aesthetician Schiller is only a step removed from Schelling's transcendental idealism, and his theory of "Spieltrieb" is rooted in the "intellektuelle Anschauung" of Fichte.¹⁸

Schiller's spiritual consanguinity with the Romanticists would have stood out much more clearly

and might have led naturally to literary alliance, had it not been for unfortunate accidents in personal relations. Misunderstandings and prejudices led to animosities which blinded the men of that day, and subsequent critics down to our own time, to the important correspondences in poetic ideals and tendencies existing between Schiller and the young writers of Jena. Had the young Friedrich Schlegel not made such an unfortunate personal impression on Schiller at their first meeting; had he happened upon a different publisher for his review of Schiller's *Musenalmanach*; had Bürger, whom Schiller judged so mercilessly, not been the friend and teacher of A. W. Schlegel, how different the outcome might have been! When one reviews the relationships of Schiller and the Romanticists, which Josef Körner¹⁹ has clearly and completely recorded, one cannot resist the conviction that here was no divergence of principle, or even of artistic temperament, but one of the fatal accidents of literary history.

The resulting hostility prevented Schiller from having an influence on Romanticism commensurate with unmistakable inner kinship and with his importance in the world of letters. It is a reasonable conjecture that the drama of the Romanticists would have profited greatly from going to school to Schiller; instead, it shows the influence of Goethe's far looser dramatic structure in *Faust* and of the epic breadth of *Wilhelm Meister*. A. W. Schle-

gel, writing to Fouqué on March 12, 1806, acknowledged the inimical effect on the Romantic drama of this association with Goethe and estrangement from Schiller.²⁰ The Schlegels came to recognize that Schiller was a greater dramatist than Goethe, and that Goethe's dramas were unsuited to the stage and were not written with an eye to the existing theatre — the very charge, ironically enough, which Goethe brought with so little warrant against Heinrich von Kleist. Had Schiller's influence taken its normal course, the Romantic drama might have gained a form much more similar to Kleist's.

When Friedrich Schlegel came to Jena in the summer of 1796, he had every reason to expect to be received as an ally by the two men whom he considered the spiritual leaders and regenerators of Germany.²¹ Their principles were his principles, their enemies his enemies. He shared their cult of idealistic humanism, and their belief in the conceptual and symbolical nature of poetry. Like them, he sought his models of humanity and poetry in an idealized Hellenic antiquity; like them he valued true rationalism and scorned its utilitarian excrescences; like them he had outgrown the one-sidedness of the "Sturm und Drang." His aesthetics were saturated with the influence of Schiller and of Schiller's philosopher, Kant.²² Moreover, both Goethe and Schiller had been extremely kind, personally and professionally, to his brother,

August Wilhelm. Had Friedrich been received by them as he had a right to expect to be received, literary history might not have had to record even an external break between "Classicism" and "Romanticism."

The case of Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* and Friedrich Schlegel's *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* illustrates again how impossible it is to sever chronologically the Romanticists from the Classicists. Schlegel's essay was already in the printer's hands when Schiller's appeared, so that the older writer's suspicion of plagiarism is baseless. The coincidences in thought and expression are simply due to the fact that here two leading thinkers and writers of the time, both nurtured in idealistic philosophy and the tradition of Greek classicism, treated a problem which was in the air at the time, the problem of the relation of antique to modern poets and poetry. The author of the essay on the study of Greek poetry might be called a Classicist and the writer of the essay on naïve and sentimental poetry, a Romanticist; so empty do these conventional epithets appear when applied to concrete cases.

On June 12, 1792, more than three years before Schiller's treatise appeared, Tieck writes to Wackenroder, inviting him to set down his views on the difficult question of "the naïve," which they had discussed earlier in Berlin; Tieck thinks he has reached firm and independent opinions on the sub-

ject, and plans to treat it in a paper before a learned society in Göttingen.²³ On December 15, 1793, exactly two years before the first instalment of Schiller's work was published in *Die Horen*, Friedrich Schlegel had perceived "dass die modernen Dichter sich in zwei Klassen zu teilen scheinen, die musikalischen und die bildenden. Göthe neigt sich mehr zu der letzten. Bürger, Klopstock und selbst Schiller sind ganz lyrisch";²⁴ thus he anticipated almost verbally a passage in Schiller.²⁵ He defines the beautiful as follows: "Das Schöne (ich stelle dessen Begriff hier nur problematisch auf, und lasse dessen wirkliche Gültigkeit und Anwendbarkeit für jetzt unentschieden) ist der allgemeingültige Gegenstand eines uninteressierten Wohlgefallens, welches von dem Zwange des Bedürfnisses und des Gesetzes gleich unabhängig, frei und dennoch notwendig, ganz zwecklos und dennoch unbedingt zweckmässig ist."²⁶ This is a tentative and original idea of Schlegel's, as the parenthetical qualification shows; it is not derived from Schiller, but from the aesthetic atmosphere of the age, and it goes back ultimately to Kant, as does another formulation: "Das Schöne im weitesten Sinne (in welchem es das Erhabne, das Schöne im engern Sinne, und das Reizende umfasst) ist die angenehme Erscheinung des Guten."²⁷ In this essay, Schlegel uses the terms "objective" and "subjective" with essentially the same meaning as Schiller's "naïve" and "sentimental"; and his "Transzen-

dentalpoesie," like Schiller's "sentimentalische Dichtung," shows the three stages: satire, elegy, and idyll.²⁸

The delay in the publication of his treatise gave him the opportunity to acknowledge in the preface the deep impression which Schiller's work had made on him and the regret that he had not known it sooner.²⁹ Even so, its effect on him was enormous. It gave him the courage of his own convictions and of his own artistic personality to have Schiller thus agree with him on cardinal principles and justify the "sentimental," the philosophical, beside the "naïve" type of poet, as being not inferior to him, but merely different. It turned him away from his exclusive Hellenism and his passion for objectivity. It is not an exaggeration to say that Schiller's influence transformed the Classicist Friedrich Schlegel into a Romanticist,³⁰ and that Schiller thereby became the spiritual father of Romanticism. Not only in 1795, but long thereafter, Schiller's and Schlegel's critical theories were closely connected.³¹

In spite of the personal enmity between Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel, which the latter lived long enough to regret, Schiller's mature works show the increasing influence of Romantic ideas and forms. The details of this influence on *Maria Stuart*, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, *Die Braut von Messina* and *Wilhelm Tell* are too well known to require recapitulation here.³² Too late, the Schlegels gained a

juster estimation of Schiller's poetic, as well as philosophical, significance. But they were then no longer the young writers of Jena; the poetic work of early Romanticism was done, and it had been done without much aid from the man who, like Heinrich von Kleist, though he marched divided from the Romanticists, helped to fight their battles.

When Goethe, near the end of his life, considered who of his younger contemporaries had been most important for his own development, he mentioned, besides Schiller and the Humboldts, only the brothers Schlegel.³³ It is hard for us to realize to what an extent our modern conception of Goethe has been determined by the early Romanticists. They were the first proclaimers of his greatness to a world far from sympathetic; with a critical talent which, like Lessing's, was near to creative genius, they interpreted his most characteristic works to a public which was inclined to disregard them; they understood him best, and it was they who established his poetic reputation. It was not an easy task: Friedrich Schlegel finds, in reviewing the career of the *Athenäum*, that "Goethe und Fichte" is the formula for all the displeasure it has caused, but he insists that these names will have to be mentioned again and again.³⁴ He could find no more fitting close for his journal than his brother's sincere though artificial sonnet in praise of Goethe.³⁵ Goethe well knew the value of the Schlegels, and he repaid their loyal apostleship with unchang-

ing graciousness and helpfulness. He welcomed August Wilhelm and Caroline in Jena no less warmly than did Schiller; he mediated between his protégés and the indignant editor of the *Horen*; with the greatest solicitude he prepared the presentation of *Ion* and *Alarcos* and defended the latter against the laughter of the Weimarian audience.³⁶ When Goethe turned away from the Schlegels, they had already turned away from their own ideals, and early Romanticism was past. Not until the circle of which Caroline was the center is broken, do we hear a harsh word from any Romanticist about Goethe; during the years from 1796 to 1804 the entire Romantic group stood very close to him.³⁷

The Romanticism of Jena is hardly conceivable without Goethe; its picture, without him, would be like Adolf Menzel's unfinished painting of the address of Frederick the Great to his generals, in which the main figure is lacking, and only its effect is visible on the surrounding personages. Novalis proclaimed Goethe to his unappreciative contemporaries as "der wahre Statthalter des poetischen Geistes auf Erden."³⁸ From his works some of the chief early Romantic theories were deduced and illustrated. He was a living example of their ideals of complete and harmonious personality, of universality and organic growth, of the synthesis of antiquity and modernity. The complex humanity of his heroes, in contrast to Schiller's, the apothe-

osis of womanhood in his works, which was to culminate in the closing lines of *Faust*, left a lasting impression on Romantic literature. The young A. W. Schlegel's recognition, in his review of Goethe's *Schriften* (1790): "Nur das Eine Gesetz scheint sich der Dichter gemacht zu haben, dem freiesten Gange seines Geistes zu folgen," is but the preliminary formulation of Friedrich Schlegel's principle: "erstes Gesetz, dass die Willkür des Dichters kein Gesetz über sich leide."³⁹ One feels tempted, like Marie Joachimi, to say that Goethe the man became the basis for the Romantic view of life; that Goethe the poet became the basis of Romantic aesthetics.⁴⁰

The early Romanticists took all poetry to be their province; they became the first real internationalists in literature, for they enlarged greatly on Herder's beginnings. A. W. Schlegel regards "die vielseitige Empfänglichkeit für fremde Nationalpoesie, die wo möglich bis zur Universalität gedeihen soll" as the necessary condition for the true art of poetic translation, which the Germans are about to invent.⁴¹ The tendency of the Romanticists toward all-embracing synthesis, their striving for universality, their thirst for the poetic in all its forms, led them far afield in the literatures of the world and persuaded them that the novel was the ideal form of poetry, "das romantische Buch," as Friedrich Schlegel called it. The novel could include all forms: the lyric, the epic, the

dramatic, and all life — the individual and his sphere, with the universe as a background. One can only surmise how far the early Romanticists were guided in this conception by the example of Goethe and his *Meister*, and how far, on the other hand, Goethe was influenced in his ideals of universality and world-literature by Romantic theory and practice. Certain it is that Goethe became acquainted with Romance and Oriental poets through his young Romantic friends, that his last great collection of lyrics, *Der west-östliche Divan*, is a fruit of the Orientalism of the Schlegels, and that his sonnets show Romantic influence. And there is no doubt that the early Romanticists saw in Goethe and his work the realization of that universality which is a principal point in Friedrich Schlegel's famous definition of Romantic poetry.⁴² Thus does the chief Romanticist conclude a survey of world-literature from Homer to Goethe: "Goethes Universalität gab einen milden Widerschein von der Poesie fast aller Nationen und Zeitalter; eine unerschöpflich lehrreiche Suite von Werken, Studien, Skizzen, Fragmenten, Versuchen in jeder Gattung und in den verschiedensten Formen. . . . Es fehlt nichts, als dass die Deutschen diese Mittel ferner brauchen, dass sie dem Vorbilde folgen, was Goethe aufgestellt hat."⁴³

Schelling, the most Romantic of philosophers, was one of the closest and strongest links between "the old gentleman" of Weimar and the young

writers of Jena. Schelling, an artist and poet as well as a philosopher, rehabilitated the phenomenal world, which Fichte had reduced to subjection to the ego, by declaring it to be an objective form of spirit, as spirit is the subjective form of nature. Schelling, like the other Romanticists and like Goethe, opposed the mechanical explanation of nature and was impressed with the idea of the metamorphosis of plants and animals.⁴⁴ In the hands of Goethe and the Romanticists, natural science became natural philosophy; Novalis, naming those who in his estimation had contributed most to this new natural philosophy, begins with Fichte and Hemsterhuis and ends with Goethe, who is destined to be "der Liturg dieser Physik."⁴⁵ One can readily comprehend why Schelling's doctrine should have appealed so powerfully to Goethe's conciliatory and pantheistic nature. Goethe was one of the first to appreciate Schelling's philosophy, and he informed the young author in a letter of September 27, 1800: "Zu Ihrer Lehre ist er [i. e., der Zug in mir] entschieden. Ich wünsche eine völlige Vereinigung, die ich durch das Studium Ihrer Schriften, noch lieber durch Ihren persönlichen Umgang . . . früher oder später zu bewirken hoffe."⁴⁶ Goethe was instrumental in calling Schelling to the University of Jena, and continued to take a warm and active personal interest in him. Schelling in turn revered him almost as a father, and there is a good deal of serious truth in Caro-

line's jesting remark that she and Goethe are Schelling's spiritual parents.⁴⁷

Here again it is impossible to estimate how much influence flowed from Goethe to Romanticism, and how much in the other direction; there is no doubt that Goethe affected, both as a poet and as a scientist, the Romanticists' view of nature in general, and Schelling's philosophy of nature in particular. Goethe has in fact been called a main source of Schelling's philosophy.⁴⁸ On the other hand it is certain that Goethe's views concerning God and the universe were affected by Schelling's "Naturphilosophie," of which he always spoke with especial affection;⁴⁹ that he planned to write, together with his young "Hausfreund," a great poem on nature;⁵⁰ and that specific traces of Schelling can be found in his poetry.⁵¹ The significant fact to observe is the remarkably close proximity, indeed identity, of the chief Classicist and the early Romanticists in points so vital for their thought and poetry. It has been said that Schelling's whole work occupies a position intermediary between Classicism and Romanticism;⁵² it might be said that all the early Romanticists, together with Heinrich von Kleist, stand, in the history of German literature, half-way between what is ordinarily called Classicism and what is ordinarily called Romanticism.

Goethe's career is the epitome of the spiritual and literary development of Germany during his

lifetime, and the appellation "Goethezeit" suggested by Korff⁵³ is doubtless superior to the conventional nomenclature. Goethe is not an exalted, solitary intellectual force, but "ein Mensch mit seinem Widerspruch," not above his time, but in and of it, partaking in its change and progress. It is easy to demonstrate a "Romantic" period at the beginning of his life, and another at the end. In fact, one may say that the Romantic element is discernible, and more or less prominent, in all the important epochs of Goethe's long career. Who will undertake to say how much, on the other hand, the tendency to break down traditional forms and barriers — a tendency which is by no means so strong in early Romanticism as is generally assumed — was inspired or strengthened by the example of *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, those two works which the Romanticists most admired and lived with? How many of Goethe's completed works display that "Classic" form which is so often adduced as the antithesis of the Romantic? Goethe's literary life moves in a great circle; he begins and ends very close to Romanticism. How futile seem those pretentious adjectives "Classic" and "Romantic," when one man, and he the greatest German poet, can be called "Romantic" in his youth and again in his age, and "Classic" in a comparatively brief period of his middle life!

How important are the Romantic elements in Goethe's works from *Werther* to the closing lines

of *Faust!* Lines such as these: "Wie oft habe ich mich mit Fittichen eines Kranichs, der über mich hinflog, zu dem Ufer des ungemessenen Weltmeers gesehnt, aus dem schäumenden Becher des Unendlichen jene schwelende Lebenswonne zu trinken" might have been written by the author of *Hyperrion* or of the *Hymnen an die Nacht*. Iphigenie's appeal to Thoas:

Bedenke nicht; gewähre, wie du's fühlst! (1992)

might have occurred in a play of Kleist's.⁵⁴ And how Kleistian, to take another random example, are the following words of a spokesman of Goethe's "Classical" view of life, the deliberate Pastor in *Hermann und Dorothea*:

Immer gefährlicher ists, beim Wählen dieses und jenes Nebenher zu bedenken und so das Gefühl zu verwirren.
(*Canto V*)

Hermann und Dorothea itself, though it ranks as one of Goethe's "Classical" works, may serve as an example of that "mixture of forms" which is so often laid at the doors of the Romanticists: it is compounded of epic, idyll, and "Novelle"; it is both antique and modern; and no name has yet been invented that completely describes it. What Romantic traits there are in *Tasso!* What a crystallization of Romantic sentiment we find in such poems as *Bergschloss* and *Schäfers Klagelied!* What a deep excursion the author of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* makes into the Romantic field of the

"night-side of nature"! It is said that Schelling suggested to Goethe the idea of this "un-Romantic" novel, which rests on the basis of "Naturphilosophie";⁵⁵ and Ottolie's voluntary death may have been due to the example which Novalis tried to set.⁵⁶

No other book was such a favorite with the early Romanticists, no other book held such sway over their thought and production, as *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Friedrich Schlegel's famous critique of this novel in the *Athenäum* is one of the finest specimens of literary criticism in the German language. To him the hero seems a genuinely Romantic character, and Mignon, who was to become one of the darlings of Romanticism, is the poetic core of the work, "das heilige Kind, mit dessen Erscheinung die innerste Springfeder des sonderbaren Werks plötzlich frei zu werden scheint."⁵⁷ He notes musical elements in Goethe's style,⁵⁸ and another important and misunderstood Romantic quality, "die Ironie, die über dem ganzen Werke schwebt," "die Willkür eines bis zur Vollendung gebildeten Geistes."⁵⁹ A later Romantic reviewer would doubtless have cited, as other Romantic elements in the book, dreams, mysterious identities, and the miraculous and supernatural. Novalis found in *Meister* Romantic philosophy and morals, Romantic irony, Romantic order.⁶⁰ *Das Märchen*, which seemed to Friedrich Schlegel the touchstone of artistic fantasy,⁶¹ and

which became the model of all Romantic writings of that type, influenced also the fairy-tale in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Novalis studied *Meister* long and deeply; his friend and biographer, Just, tells us that it was the young poet's favorite book and that he knew it almost by heart.⁶² Goethe's novel left its mark indelibly not only on *Ofterdingen* but on *Sternbald*, on *Lucinde*, and on Dorothea's *Florentin*. The Romantic novel and in a certain sense the Romantic drama are inconceivable without *Wilhelm Meister*.

Unlike the *Lehrjahre*, Goethe's greatest work, *Faust*, came late enough, not so much to influence early Romanticism as to be influenced by it. But Caroline and the Schlegels were among the few who divined already in the *Fragment* of 1790 the greatness of the completed work. *Faust* is an all-inclusive lyric-epic-dramatic work, a spacious universal poem embracing earth and heaven, such as the boldest Romantic dreams could hardly have surpassed. The rich diversity of form and content, the varying verse, the actual occurrence of prose, that most unclassical of all forms of diction, is after the heart of Romanticism. The whole restless rhythm of Faust's life is Romantic, is Kleistian and Hölderlinian; his life's striving is progressive and infinite in the sense in which Romantic poetry is "progressive Universalpoesie." Thus Goethe's most characteristic work, which became more than any other the record of his life and the

receptacle of his philosophy, demonstrates the worthlessness of the moment and the value of the infinite and ever-incomplete.⁶³ It emphasizes "becoming" as against "being,"⁶⁴ longing as against attainment; and its hero leaves the earth at last to seek, in a life beyond, satisfaction for the metaphysical craving which he shares with Kleist, Hölderlin, and Novalis. There is a large element of Christianity and mysticism in *Faust* which relates it to the Romantic spirit; Faust, though the representative of Goethe's Classical "Diesseitigkeit," finds his final salvation in another world; for all his tireless endeavor on earth, he has need of divine grace to be saved.

The Romanticists, like the Classicists, believed all art to be symbolical; their hostility to naturalism was one of their strongest bonds of union.⁶⁵ Goethe has often been superficially distinguished as "realistic" from Schiller, the "idealist," and Romanticism as "allegorical" from Classicism. But the Classicists and the Romanticists were all idealists and allegorists; poetry meant for them a poetic representation of ideas, such as Friedrich Schlegel found in Goethe;⁶⁶ and they took care that their symbols should not be confounded with reality. In a letter from Rome, December 12-23, 1786, to the Duchess Luise, Goethe ascribes the difference between a product of nature and a work of art to the fact that the former is complete in itself, whereas the best part of the work of art is

the idea in the artist's mind which he can never completely express.⁶⁷ The work of art is only an imperfect copy of an ideal: "Das Schöne ist ein Urphänomen, das zwar nie selber zur Erscheinung kommt, dessen Abglanz aber in tausend verschiedenen Äusserungen des schaffenden Geistes sichtbar wird."⁶⁸ Quite similar is the statement in the *Symposium on Poetry*: "Alle Schönheit ist Allegorie. Das Höchste kann man, eben weil es unaußprechlich ist, nur allegorisch sagen."⁶⁹ Faust cannot envisage God, only the earth, "der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid"; he comes to see that life is only a colorful reflection of eternity. In the same tenor are the utterances of the Romanticist: "Alles Sichtbare hat nur die Wahrheit einer Allegorie"; "Gott erblicken wir nicht, aber überall erblicken wir Göttliches."⁷⁰ Faust, old and blind, but wise, has lost the power of his physical eye but gained the power of feeling things not plastically representable, and learned that the temporal world is merely a symbol for the eternal ("Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis").

Thus, under the rejuvenating influence of a younger literary group, the repressed Romantic element in Goethe comes to the surface again toward the end of his life; his last dramatic works, finished and unfinished, are Romantic in form and content, and his greatest poem, begun in the "Sturm und Drang," was completed in the spirit of Romanticism.⁷¹

The early Romanticists, though they revered Goethe as the highest summit which German literature had attained, firmly believed that there were still loftier summits to come. They saw in him, not the culminator, but the inaugurator of an era of poetry; not its midday, but only its dawn. "Göthens Poesie," writes young Friedrich Schlegel, "ist die Morgenröte echter Kunst und reiner Schönheit. . . . Er steht in der Mitte zwischen dem Interessanten und dem Schönen, zwischen dem Manierierten und dem Objektiven. . . . Dieser grosse Künstler eröffnet die Aussicht auf eine ganz neue Stufe der ästhetischen Bildung."⁷² Eight years later, the editor of *Europa* still saw in Goethe's poetry the foundation of a new age: "Goethes dichterische Laufbahn ist die lehrreichste Einleitung zu der neuen Epoche, und zum Studium der Poesie überhaupt; er ist als die Basis unsrer Bildung zu betrachten."⁷³ Novalis spoke more sharply: "Goethe wird und muss übertragen werden."⁷⁴ He appreciated the qualities whereby Goethe had surpassed the Greeks, but he was convinced that Goethe himself must be surpassed.

In this peculiar disposition of reverence for the Classical art of Weimar and refusal to accept it as final, Heinrich von Kleist is in complete accord with the leaders of Romanticism. Whether or not Kleist ever uttered the words attributed to him: "Ich werde ihm [i. e., Goethe] den Kranz von der

Stirne reissen!" they represent the substance, if not the articulate form, of his ambition, and they express, in characteristically more personal, more passionate, and more dramatic terms, the deliberate intent of the early Romanticists. Like them, he had a high regard for Lessing and was acquainted with his poetical and critical works.⁷⁵ Like them he had fed on the earlier writings of Wieland, and if subsequently he stood closer to the aging writer whom they, like Goethe and Schiller, had come to deprecate, it was on personal rather than literary grounds.

Kleist did not doubt that Goethe and Schiller were the acme of German literature of his time.⁷⁶ Like them he regarded the exposition of character as being the ultimate aim of the drama, and the difference in the technique with which he and the Classicists pursued this common aim has generally been overestimated. The young Kleist was inspired by the ideal of complete and harmonious humanity, of "allseitige Bildung," which they, like him the heirs of Rationalism, had done so much to make the common property of the age. Kleist's *Phöbus*, launched on the advice of Körner⁷⁷ and expressly announced as patterned after Schiller's *Horen*,⁷⁸ was devoted, as its predecessor had been, to the aesthetic cult of pure 18th-century humanism. Kleist's youthful conception of friendship, like that of Friedrich Schlegel, Wackenroder, and Novalis, is in large measure patterned after the

relations of Carlos and Posa. Kleist's writings fairly teem with reminiscences of Schiller, as the investigations of Fries⁷⁹ and Holzgraefe⁸⁰ have proved. No other work of German literature made such a lasting impression on him as *Wallenstein*, and its traces can be followed in his own works from first to last; he recommended it to Ulrike as a book to be not only read, but memorized, and he conceived his love for Wilhelmine in terms of Max and Thekla.⁸¹

There are points of intimate contact not only between *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* and Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*, but also between *Über Anmut und Würde* and Kleist's essay. Kleist's theory of the unconscious grace of the puppets may be called the aesthetic counterpart of Schiller's ethical theory of the instinctive goodness of the "schöne Seele." How like Schiller's thought and diction are Kleist's when he speaks of "das Eigentum einiger wenigen schönern Seelen, die Tugend allein um der Tugend selbst willen zu lieben und zu üben."⁸² How like the admonition of Thekla's "schöne Seele" to Max to follow his first feeling⁸³ are Kleist's frequent exhortations to his friends and himself: "Das ist die Weisheit des Staubes: was Ihnen Ihr Herz sagt, ist Goldklang. . . . Alle diese Vorschriften . . . sie sind nicht für den, dem ein Gott in seinem Innern heimlich anvertraut, was recht ist."⁸⁴ And these words — so inextricable are the interrelations of this age —

remind one in turn of Friedrich Schlegel's definition of religiosity: "wenn man nichts mehr um die Pflicht, sondern alles aus Liebe tut, bloss weil man es will, und wenn man es nur darum will, weil es Gott sagt, nämlich Gott in uns."⁸⁵

Goethe's influence also is revealed in Kleist's poetic works, and Kleist's attitude toward Goethe, like that of the early Romanticists, was one of reverence and rivalry. Goethe's name appears in large type as the climax of the announcement of *Phöbus*,⁸⁶ and Kleist embellished his journal from time to time with sanguine but unfounded promises of Goethe's coöperation. He, like the Schlegels, sent to Goethe a copy *de luxe* of the first issue of his new periodical.⁸⁷ It cannot be doubted that he would have been no less delighted than the editors of the *Athenäum*, by the slightest contribution from the leading German poet, and that he did not consider such aid improbable. For Kleist, too, was conscious, not of sharp divergence from Goethe, but rather of fundamental agreement with his views; and he, too, took occasion to recommend Goethe's plays to an indifferent public.⁸⁸ In deliberate moments, he did not venture to compare himself to Goethe,⁸⁹ yet he, like the early Romanticists, felt that it was his historical destiny to supplement and complete Goethe's work and thus to go a step beyond him. His feeling when he presented *Penthesilea* "auf den Knieen meines Herzens"⁹⁰ to the sovereign poet was one of deep

respect but not of unconditional adoration. He well knew the differences of his poetic art, as here exemplified, from Goethe's; but he had reason to believe that Goethe would recognize the essential unity of their poetic ideals. He did not expect the author of *Iphigenie* to be repelled by *Penthesilea*, and he would hardly have offered his work to Goethe thus had he felt it to be antipodal to Goethe's own.

One has the sad impression, as in the case of Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel, that Goethe's averseness to Kleist was chiefly a matter of personal prejudice. Impartially and historically considered, there are many reasons why Goethe should have welcomed Kleist's work: his objectivity in drama and narrative, an ideal which Goethe cherished but did not attain, on the whole, so successfully as Kleist; his rigorous structure and concentration, in contrast to the amorphous diffuseness of Tieck. There is no evidence that Goethe ever read *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*; yet this play should have appealed very strongly to his artistic nature, not only through its formal perfection, but also because of its essentially un-tragic, conciliatory tendency. It is inexplicable, without the admission of unreasonable bias, that Goethe should have made such a mistake as to regard confusion of feeling as Kleist's final aim in *Amphytrion*,⁹¹ or that he should have given Kleist no encouragement at a time when he fostered in Weimar the products

of writers far inferior. It is astounding what pains Goethe took to understand Zacharias Werner's turbid nature and poetry, whereas he repulsed impatiently the far less pathological Kleist. *Toni*, Theodor Körner's puerile imitation of Kleist's *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, had the good fortune to be read by Goethe to the Court, and to be supplied with stage-decorations by his own august hand, while Kleist's name was not even mentioned.

It is strange that Goethe should have condemned in Kleist's plays a disregard of dramaturgic exigencies which was not only more or less axiomatic in that age, but was illustrated by his own work and most egregiously by Friedrich Schlegel's *Alarcos*; yet the latter was performed in the Weimar Hoftheater and was the object of Goethe's affectionate concern. Goethe had violated, and was yet to violate, the doctrine of "hic Rhodus, hic salta!" which he threw into Kleist's teeth,⁹² and he was the last to constrain dramatic genius, in principle or practice, to the chance capabilities of a contemporary stage.

It is readily admitted that the Goethe of the "Sturm und Drang," the author of *Götz* and *Werther*, had very much in common with Heinrich von Kleist; but the fact is often ignored that there was an appreciable residue of that "problematical nature" in the author not only of *Faust* but of *Tasso*, that there is an active element of Dionysian tragedy even under the serene classicality of *Iphigenie*.

We are not permitted to forget that the pure priestess of Diana, no less than her brother, is of the vicious lineage of Tantalus. The whole complex of Orestes, with its Titans and its Furies, its passions and its revolting crimes, belongs to the dark, tragic side of Greek antiquity.

Bin ich bestimmt zu leben und zu handeln,
So nehm' ein Gott von meiner schweren Stirn
Den Schwindel weg, der auf dem schlüpfrigen
Mit Mutterblut besprengten Pfade fort
Mich zu den Toten reisst. Er trockne gnädig
Die Quelle, die, mir aus der Mutter Wunden
Entgegensprudelnd, ewig mich befleckt. (749-755)

One can imagine Goethe to have been horrified at such lines, with all their implications, had he found them in *Penthesilea*.

And there is yet another, quite different, Romantic note in Goethe's play: that of longing. "Sehnsucht" is not a classical, but indubitably a Romantic feeling, and the attitude of Goethe's heroine, as she stands on the Scythian shore, "das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend," is expressive not only of that yearning which led the German Romanticists into distant times and climes, but in particular of the nostalgic Hellenism of Friedrich Schlegel and of Hölderlin. The element of longing, however, was never wholly absent from German Hellenism. Very like Iphigenie's attitude is that of Winckelmann, as he looks back, in concluding his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, upon the bygone beauties of Greek art, "so wie

eine Liebste an dem Ufer des Meeres ihren abfahrenden Liebhaber, ohne Hoffnung ihn wieder zu sehen, mit betränten Augen verfolgt und selbst in dem entfernten Segel das Bild des Geliebten zu sehen glaubt.”⁹³ The German character, as such, seems to be especially disposed to “Sehnsucht”; and this is one of the many reasons why “Classic” and “Romantic” in German literature can never constitute an antithesis. Strich himself has demonstrated that, in the eyes of Romance races, even German Classicism has appeared Romantic and has exerted a Romantic influence in European literature.⁹⁴

VII

Kleist and the Romanticists

THE relations of the German Classicists and Romanticists illustrate in a number of respects the tragedy of the relations of different generations to each other. Really fundamental community of spiritual antecedents and literary ideals was not acknowledged by the most important writers of the time because of differences in age and outward conditions of life. The generation to which Heinrich von Kleist and Friedrich Schlegel belonged were the children of a more complex epoch than that of Goethe's and even Schiller's youth, and, naturally enough, they appeared to the older men distraught, nervous, and restless. Yet, when one remembers the rich intellectual heritage of the early Romanticists, it is astonishing that they have so little of the character of "epigoni," that they are so progressive and forward-looking and vigorous. They were the heirs of Emotionalism and Rationalism, of the "Sturm und Drang" and the works of Goethe's and Schiller's early maturity; they shared in the enthusiasm for Rousseau and they grew up in the atmosphere of the idealistic philosophy of Kant and Fichte; in the realm of politics they wit-

nessed the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon, and in the realm of science, the great expansive discoveries of physicists, chemists, and astronomers.

It was inevitable that this younger generation should have a more complicated "Lebensgefühl" than their predecessors, a new consciousness of space, of infinity, of what Friedrich Schlegel called "das unendlich volle Chaos," by which he meant, not the chaos of confusion, but a pregnant cosmic state; not a condition of destruction, but a whirling mass about to produce new things. But with this sense of a richness that defies limitation and formation, these men had also the desire to organize and synthesize their vast patrimony, to reduce it to controllable concepts and forms. Here one may see the origin of both the formless and formal tendencies of Romanticism, its dissolution and its cohesion, its mysticism and its rationalism. These two tendencies, toward the opening and closing of form, can be detected also in Heinrich von Kleist and his works.

This whole generation betrays, in contrast to Goethe and Schiller, an inner inquietude which expresses itself in outward changefulness of life, in travel and disinclination for stationary occupations and offices. They were tormented by endless dualisms of reason and feeling, of consciousness and unconsciousness, of wealth of soul and absence of public activity. They felt pain-

fully the incompatibility of their poetic mission and their practical careers, the antithesis between themselves and their families; this is as true of Kleist and Novalis as of Wackenroder, if we may take his account of Joseph Berglinger¹ as autobiographical. How "*kleinstädtisch*," how sedentary is the older generation! Goethe's trip to Italy is of the nature of a brief excursion from home; Wieland moved little and Schiller hardly at all. How different is the pattern of Kleist's life: decisive changes, epoch-making movements that bear him from one end of Europe to another—Königsberg, Strassburg, St. Omer, Paris, Prague, Geneva, Pillau, Lyons are the stages of his stormy course.

These manifold antinomies, subdued still in Kleist and the beginners of Romanticism, break forth, under the blows of public distress, in the "*Zerrissenheit*" and "*Weltschmerz*" of a still later generation. The same struggle for inner peace and unity which Kleist and Hölderlin continued heroically to their end, Friedrich Schlegel terminated by a retreat to religious quietism. Kleist and the surviving Romanticists of Jena suffered shipwreck on the reefs of the Napoleonic years. Given favorable outward conditions, they might well have achieved their purpose and ushered in a new era of German poetry. But the times had no need for their purely literary preoccupations nor patience with them; their work was cut short and they were drafted into the national

cause. Kleist wrote patriotic tracts and Schlegel spent his time as secretary in the Austrian headquarters. When one has fully understood the poetic ideals cherished by Kleist and the early Romanticists, one cannot agree with those who represent the turning away of these men to patriotic duties as an unmixed blessing, or as the culmination of their careers. The poet who attempted *Robert Guiskard* had probably more value for his country and the world than the writer of the lurid and greatly overestimated *Hermannsschlacht*; the most significant element in *Kohlhaas* and *Homburg* is not that patriotic "Tendenz" which they share with the writings of Theodor Körner and Joseph von Collin; and the achievements of Friedrich Schlegel before and after 1806 illustrate with pathetic force the fact that the worth of a life is qualitative and not quantitative.

The early Romanticists, like Heinrich von Kleist, are supposed to have been secluded from life, but in truth they were, as Kleist testified of himself, most intimately connected with it. They had deep-rooted ideals of public service, and they longed, like Hölderlin, to give themselves to the common life; but not in the manner which the need of the moment dictated. The Romanticists were extremely sociable natures, and that quality has often been regarded as differentiating them from Kleist. But those who make out Kleist as "ein grosser Einsamer" are unjust not only to the

potentialities but to the facts of his life. He had an unusual social endowment, though fate often denied him the exercise of it. He thoroughly enjoyed a sympathetic circle when he found one, as he did in Bern and Dresden; his life was marked by friendships of unusual depth and permanence, and he suffered acutely under the isolation of the last months of his life. He too, like the "symphi-losophers" and "sympoets" of Jena, felt the stimulus and inspiration of having a human face before him;² he, too, like Novalis and the Schlegels, needed conversation and contradiction to be productive;³ and his extraordinary essay, *Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden*, is proof that he, too, knew the magic of creative speech. The ideas developed in this essay are strikingly similar not only to certain of Novalis' fragments, but to one of his *Monologe*, which considers the same mysterious problem of the relation of thought and expression: "Jede Rede," says Novalis, "setzt die Gedanken erst in Bewegung und ist so eingerichtet, dass man die Gedankenfinger in der leichtesten Ordnung auf bestimmte Stellen setzt."⁴ "Wenn einer bloss spricht, um zu sprechen, so spricht er gerade die herrlichsten, originellsten Wahrheiten aus. Will er aber von etwas Bestimmtem sprechen, so lässt ihn die launige Sprache das lächerlichste und verkehrteste Zeug sagen."⁵

It was Kleist's ironical destiny to come into touch, not with those original Romanticists with whom he had most in common personally and poetically, but with the lesser and later representatives of the movement. Dresden, one of the earliest meeting-grounds of Romanticism, was the scene of important turning-points in Kleist's life, and of his chief literary association with the Romanticists. But the Romanticism he found here was a diluted and popularized Romanticism, represented chiefly by Adam Müller, a man of uncertain literary character. Not Novalis, who was long since dead; not Friedrich Schlegel, who had just completed his transition to Catholicism and reaction; not Schelling, who had ceased to be important for Romanticism; but men like Müller, G. H. Schubert, and F. G. Wetzel transmitted Romantic doctrine to Kleist. By Schubert, the pupil of Schelling, and not by Schelling himself, Kleist was introduced to the Romantic philosophy of nature.⁶ To Schubert's lectures, *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*, Kleist listened with eagerness; Schubert's influence on Kleist's works, especially the depiction of somnambulism in *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, is indubitable and considerable;⁷ and thus indirectly, through the mediation of a late-Romantic half-scientist, Kleist had what should have been an exhilarating contact with Romantic philosophy and with the great scientific exploits of his time.

Adam Müller, whom Dorothea Schlegel called a gleaner in the footsteps of the leaders of Romanticism⁸ and in whom her husband saw an element of the charlatan,⁹ seems to have been a clever dilettante, quick-witted but shallow, of the type of Heinrich Zschokke, but with more than Zschokke's ability. A rather pretentious amateur philosopher, a voluble lecturer to Dresden parlors on multifarious subjects, an adroit purveyor of the timely ideas of others, he drew from many sources a stream of oratory by no means clear. That Kleist expressed a high opinion of him and his writings, as he did later of Fouqué's,¹⁰ is a finer tribute to Kleist's loyal friendship than to his critical judgment. How much influence Müller may have exercised on Kleist is a matter of conjecture, in the absence of documentary evidence. To one of Schiller's circle, Dora Stock, Müller appeared as Kleist's evil genius, as he certainly was at the time of the *Berliner Abendblätter*. It may be that the proselytizing bent of the recent convert affected Kleist's religious thought in the surroundings where, six years earlier, he had his first emotional and artistic experience with Catholicism.¹¹ It may have been the conservative patriot and incipient reactionary, the hater of Napoleon, who was chiefly instrumental in awakening Kleist's national feeling. Kleist's opinion of the Romanticists and their work may have been influenced by the frequent

laudatory remarks on the Schlegels, Novalis, and Schelling in the lectures which his co-editor spread upon the pages of *Phöbus*.

Whatever may have been the contribution of Müller, it is certain that Kleist begins to exhibit, during his stay in Dresden, certain tendencies typical of Romanticism, especially of later Romanticism. He turns from aesthetic cosmopolitanism, in the service of which *Phöbus* was launched, to national patriotism. Heretofore none of his works had dealt with native subjects—for the German cloak of *Die Familie Schroffenstein* is superficial and an after-thought; henceforth, in *Käthchen*, *Kohlhaas*, *Hermannsschlacht*, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, he takes his themes from his country's past. He acquires, principally through the teachings of Schubert, an interest in the supernatural and occult, which constitute henceforth a constant element in his works, and which were carried to such inordinate lengths by the later Romanticists. *Käthchen* shows in full the effect of Dresden Romanticism on Kleist: in its restoration of a miraculous Middle Age, in its poetic adaptation of magnetism and somnambulism, in its sweetness and sentimentality, it displays all too clearly certain typical qualities of that Romanticism of which Tieck and his later associates were the most prolific exponents. Nor can it be said that the influence of Dresden was to the advantage of the latter part of *Michael Kohlhaas*: the patriotic bias and the

intrusion of the supernatural impair its artistic form and do not add to its poetic significance.

At almost the same time, the Romanticists of Heidelberg, in their *Zeitung für Einsiedler* and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, were voicing a kindred enthusiasm for the German past. The cultivation of the medieval, though it is found already in Wackenroder and Novalis, is, in its characteristic development, a property of later Romanticism. The early Romanticists were hopeful of the future and believed, like Kleist, that paradise is to be regained by going forward; only a later and thwarted Romanticism sought salvation in a misty medieval paradise which Tieck, more than any other, had fabricated.

The Romantic cult of the native past merges imperceptibly into Romantic patriotism. Here, too, it is impossible to draw a hard and fast chronological line between early and late Romanticism. But it is not without significance that Friedrich Schlegel's removal to Paris in 1802, which terminated the youthful period of his career, also produced, in the poems *Am Rhein* and *Bei der Wartburg*, the first symptoms of his nascent patriotism. The early Romanticists shared in regard to Napoleon the objective, artistic view expressed by Goethe to Eckermann on March 11, 1828; they were engrossed in cultural problems of great moment, and the peace and order which Napoleon's supremacy brought did not seem to

them immediately objectionable. *Phöbus*, "ein Journal für die Kunst," was announced and maintained as "a literary project in every sense indifferent to politics";¹² and the editor of the equally unpolitical *Athenäum* wrote: "Nicht in die politische Welt verschleudere du Glauben und Liebe, aber in der göttlichen Welt der Wissenschaft und der Kunst opfre dein Innerstes in den heiligen Feuerstrom ewiger Bildung."¹³ Wackenroder confesses to Tieck: "Auch ich bin einmal so eingerichtet, dass die idealische Kunstschönheit der Lieblingsgegenstand meines Geistes ist; ich kann mich unmöglich von lebhaftem Interesse hingerissen fühlen, wenn ich in den Zeitungen lese, dass die Preussen itzt diesen, die Franzosen itzt jenen Ort eingenommen haben, und was dergleichen Partikularia mehr sind."¹⁴ Between these utterances and those of Kleist's *Katechismus der Deutschen* runs the line that divides the 18th from the 19th century. Kleist's career, which compresses into one brief decade the literary development of his age from "Sturm und Drang" to "Spätromantik," epitomizes also the transition of his whole generation from cosmopolitanism to patriotism.¹⁵

A common patriotic interest, not a literary one, was the principal bond of actual union between Kleist and the Romanticists. The only letter, so far as we know, which he ever wrote to an essential Romanticist, is dated 1809 and addressed

to the Austrian Hof- und Staatssekretär von Schlegel in the matter of the *Germania*. Friedrich Schlegel, like Kleist, took a literary part in the struggle against Napoleon; he was attached to the headquarters of Archduke Charles, whom Kleist celebrated in song; he was near, like Kleist, to the scene of hostilities in 1809, and it is not inconceivable that they met on this occasion. With him Kleist could assume a community of interests;¹⁶ but there is no evidence that the poet Kleist had, then or earlier, any connection with the leader of early Romanticism. Only once more is Friedrich Schlegel's name mentioned in Kleist's writings: as that of a contributor to a patriotic periodical, the *Vaterländisches Museum*, which the editor of the *Abendblätter* recommends warmly to his readers.¹⁷

This patriotic interest also links Kleist with the later Romanticists of Berlin. The disguised patriotism of Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* is found also in Kleist's *Gebet des Zoroaster* and *Die Hermannsschlacht*, and to the latter, Arnim's play *Die Vertreibung der Spanier aus Wesel* shows striking similarities both in intent and method. There is no doubt that, during his last two years in Berlin, Kleist was strongly in sympathy with the political and cultural views of his Romantic friends. He felt their enthusiasm for the Prussian rulers, especially Queen Louise. He was united with them in the "Christlich-deutsche Tischgesell-

schaft," a conservative, patriotic society of which his *Berliner Abendblätter* was more or less the official organ. In fact, the activity of Adam Müller as a spokesman of the Prussian agrarian party in its opposition to governmental reforms seems to have been the chief reason for the suppression of Kleist's paper. We know that Kleist saw a good deal of Arnim and Brentano, who were his near neighbors in the Mauerstrasse and often joined him at table; and that he associated with Rahel and her later husband, Varnhagen.

At the end of his life he evinced a strong desire for closer association with Arnim and Fouqué, both of whom he had previously neglected;¹⁸ these effusions of friendliness, however, are motivated in great part by the desolate loneliness of that last summer. There is evidence that Kleist drew nearer also to the religious and musical interests of the Berlin Romanticists. Moreover, he announced to his publisher in July, 1811, that he was engaged in the composition of a two-volume novel.¹⁹ Whether his statement that the work was well advanced is to be taken literally, or whether, with his usual anticipatory optimism in business matters, he speaks of hopes as realities, at any rate the very project of a novel in two volumes indicates a departure in Kleist's literary career that would have brought him much nearer to Romantic practice. If we may trust Pfuel's statement, Kleist considered it humiliating

to have to descend from drama to narrative. For the undramatic Romanticists, on the other hand, the novel is a favorite form. Hitherto Kleist had differed from them in writing, not copious novels after the model of Goethe's *Meister*, but compressed "Novellen" in which he applied an essentially dramatic technique. Even *Kohlhaas*, with its one hundred octavo pages, is only a rather long "Novelle," and would have been still briefer but for the influence of Dresden Romanticism.

In view of all these symptoms of Kleist's approach to the later Romanticists at the end of his life, one may well ask: Would Kleist, had he lived, have undergone the change visible in the writers who, like him, were born in the seventies of the eighteenth century? Would Kleist have gone farther toward the Romanticism of Tieck, Brentano, and Hoffmann, with whom, after all, he had important traits in common? Or would his pre-eminently dramatic genius have prevented such a development? Even if he had wanted to, Kleist could not have written such plays and novels as Tieck's. It seems far more probable that he would have taken up again the great stylistic problem of early Romanticism, the problem of *Guiskard*, which he had resumed in *Homburg*, and on which he hoped to get new light from the study of music. There is nothing to prove that Kleist ever gave up the ideal of *Guiskard*, the new dramatic style, of which the trail is so strangely lost between the first and

second volumes of Meyer-Benfey's extensive treatise.²⁰ Whatever attempts have been made in recent years to devise a consistent pattern to fit the frame of Kleist's life, it remains clear that this life and its poetic work were interrupted and left incomplete. So surely as Kleist would have continued his striving for the great synthetic style of poetry, so surely he would have continued to be, in poetic character, an early Romanticist.

Arnim, as one of the leaders of later Romanticism, felt called upon in 1812 to defend the dead Kleist against the charge of adherence to this "neuere Schule."²¹ His statement shows that the Romanticists of Berlin did not recognize Kleist officially as one of theirs, that, for all their agreement with the editor of the *Abendblätter* on questions of public life, they did not admit any literary alliance with him. What Arnim, the late-Romantic novelist and publicist, does not say, and indeed was hardly qualified to discern, was that Kleist, though never formally a member of any school, had embodied dramatically certain intrinsic ideals of the early Romanticists; that, though outwardly separated from these men in time and in the consciousness of his contemporaries, Kleist seemed destined to achieve in the history of German letters a step which they regarded as an historical necessity of the age. Kleist was saved by fate, as Friedrich Schlegel was not, from the danger of growing old; his literary counten-

ance, like that of Hölderlin, Novalis, and Jena Romanticism, remained youthful. The Romanticism which Arnim typified was old and really epigonus; its function was to conserve the past, and to apply in pleasing literary production the less momentous theories of the pioneers of the movement.

The statements which Arnim and Brentano made concerning Kleist before and after his death show how superficial was their knowledge of him and his works.²² There is no record of connection between the editors of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and the contemporary *Phöbus*, nor of any but journalistic relations between the editor and the contributors of the *Berliner Abendblätter*. It is significant that both Arnim and Brentano, whose actual reading of Kleist's works seems to have been limited to the fragments published in *Phöbus*, were painfully surprised at Kleist's slow and laborious mode of writing. Kleist's editorial blue pencil cut down mercilessly the facile prolixity of his late-Romantic contributors. One needs only to compare an original essay by Brentano with Kleist's abridged version,²³ in which five or six pages are reduced to one, or Fouqué's *Die Heilung* with Kleist's, in which two pages represent an original twenty-eight,²⁴ to realize the difference between Kleist's precision of form and the diffuseness of these writers.

Friedrich Schlegel spoke of "Brentanismus" as a children's disease,²⁵ and was pleased to find a young writer unafflicted with it. Brentano was really a dilettante, and his life and works, of which the one as rarely showed the effect of discipline as the other attained clarity, are of the kind that have brought the words "Romantic" and "temperamental" into disrepute. Kleist's manly rigor could have found as little attraction in Brentano's passive waywardness as in Tieck's volatile fancy, which too often lacked the structural robustness of imagination. Schiller accused Tieck of garrulosity, and the vague formlessness of many of his works was an all too easy model for younger writers. We are indebted to Tieck for the zeal, if not speed, with which he published Kleist's posthumous works, but it can hardly be said that he appreciated Kleist, living or dead: he classified him, according to a purely perfunctory definition of "genius," together with Tasso, Rousseau, Lenz, Otway, Marlowe, Nathaniel Lee, "and the like," as a shipwrecked writer whose talent had undermined his character.²⁶ Fouqué naïvely relates in his *Lebensgeschichte*²⁷ that Kleist, when he met him in Dresden, chose to speak only of military matters; not, we may be sure, for the reason given by Fouqué, namely, that he belonged to the "Schlegelian" school and Kleist to the "Wielandian," but because the poet of *Guiskard* had so little to say to him of his all-engrossing ideals.

But though Kleist's personal fate granted him contact only with the later and lesser Romantics, his place in German literary history is rather with that earliest group which promulgated the theories and voiced the ideals of the movement, however much it lacked the productive power to illustrate them worthily in practice. These theories and ideals were an organic and historically necessary outgrowth of the period in which Romanticism follows Classicism; they were the contribution of Kleist's generation to the development of German literature. Kleist resembled the early Romanticists in cherishing these ideals; he differed from the early Romanticists chiefly in having the poetic genius to realize them, at least approximately, in practice. Like them, he combined rational and irrational constituents in his personal and poetic character; like them, he insisted on form and discipline in art; like them, he considered himself not the opponent but the perfecter of Classicism, intent on conserving its achievements and yet going beyond it. He aimed at a new form of art which was to be a synthesis of the past and the present, giving strict classical form to a rich content of the modern and the characteristic. Not Tieck but Kleist may claim to be the representative poet and dramatist of Romanticism in its most important phase.

Kleist's claim was not, to be sure, recognized by his contemporaries, even the nearest. In all

the letters which Friedrich Schlegel wrote to his brother between 1791 and 1828, Kleist's name is not mentioned once, nor is he spoken of in the two ample volumes of correspondence which Georg Waitz and Erich Schmidt have collected under the title *Caroline. Briefe aus der Frühromantik*. On the other hand, the name of no Romanticist occurs in Kleist's letters until the close of 1807. Neither in the first (1808) nor in the second (1817) edition of his *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* does A. W. Schlegel take the slightest cognizance of the poet who most nearly fulfilled the Romantic conception of the drama. In a notebook written during the winter following Kleist's death²⁸ Friedrich Schlegel lists a dozen or more members of his own, Romantic generation, beginning with Schiller and including writers with whom Kleist had been in touch, like Fouqué, Adam Müller, and G. H. Schubert — but Kleist is not in the list. The great reviews of the time in Jena, Halle, Leipzig, and elsewhere passed Kleist's work by unnoticed; no established authority said a good word in his behalf.²⁹

It is difficult to conceive today how insignificant Kleist appeared to his contemporaries. No school or faction claimed him, because he did not seem worth claiming. So far as I have observed, Adam Müller never so much as mentions Kleist's name in the course of his heterogeneous lectures. If Müller had read only those samples of Kleist's

drama which appeared side by side with his own contributions in *Phöbus*, one should expect to see the result in his critical writings, which contain frequent commendation of the Schlegels, Novalis, and Schelling. In the eyes of the leaders of thought and literature of the time, "der arme Kauz aus Brandenburg" disappeared before the dazzling figure of Müller, who could boast of praise from the Schlegels and even from Goethe.³⁰ In one of his uncritical medleys of names, the lecturer on dramatic art makes not only Goethe and Schiller but Tieck and the Schlegels appear as innovators in the German drama, and passes in silence over the only genuine innovator among the contemporary dramatists.³¹ When Kleist's fellow-worker failed to recognize his importance, it is not so startling that a more distant contemporary, Jakob Grimm, should have considered the writer of *Halle und Jerusalem* a dramatist superior to the author of *Käthchen von Heilbronn*.³²

In the perspective of more than a century later, we are able to descry relations strangely invisible to the persons most concerned. We can see what tragical chance governed the literary associations of Heinrich von Kleist. He did not meet with the great men of his age and his spiritual kinsmen. When his first drama is born, in Paris, he has no comrade save the loyal but unpoetic Ulrike. When he appears as a poet, it is in the circle of shallow *littérateurs* like Zschokke,

Ludwig Wieland, and Heinrich Gessner. The elder Wieland's friendship, which was valuable for him personally rather than poetically, may have helped to make him unwelcome to the Romanticists. His periods of greatest poetic productivity are enveloped by the atmosphere of Prussian officialdom in Königsberg and of faded Romanticism in Dresden; and his last poetic years, culminating in his finest drama, find him with no more congenial employment than the editing of a newspaper baited by the censorship, and with no closer literary kin than Adam Müller, Arnim, and Fouqué. The dramatist who saw not one of his plays on the stage, the patriot whose ardent pamphlets were published a half-century after his death, missed, for reasons chronological or accidental, connections with Goethe, Schiller, the Schlegels, and Novalis, and drew near only to the lesser lights of his time.

It seems strange and tragic, from our point of view, that Hölderlin and Novalis, so alike in spirit, took no notice of each other; that Novalis and Wackenroder, or Kleist and Beethoven should not have found each other out. A slight shifting of strata seems to make kindred contemporaries unrecognizable to each other. Why did not the Romanticists perceive their affinity to Herder and Klopstock? Herder was a premature Romanticist just as truly as Schiller was a belated "Stürmer und Dränger."

It is not surprising that Kleist should not have been familiar with early Romantic doctrine; he never evinced much interest in theoretical writings on his art; and when he came to Dresden in 1807, that phase of Romanticism was a thing of the past. He had his closest contact with Romanticism through the agency of Müller, at a time when Wackenroder and Novalis were long since dead. *Robert Guiskard* was published in the May number of *Phöbus*, a few weeks after Friedrich Schlegel's conversion in Köln. The author of *Guiskard* was wrestling with the great stylistic ideal envisaged but not realized by the early Romanticists, at a time when they had abandoned it; *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, in which this ideal first took shape in a perfected drama, appeared in 1821, when no one was any longer interested in the matter or in the poet who had moldered for a decade in his forgotten grave by the Wannsee.

Who, indeed, could have expected Friedrich Schlegel in 1821 to greet in Kleist's play the incarnation of his own youthful vision? When his prophetic lips were uttering the ideals of Romanticism for the future of German literature, when a rich and momentous literary life was teeming in Weimar, Jena, and Berlin, Kleist was a dissatisfied sub-lieutenant in the Potsdam garrison or a secluded student of sciences at a sleepy provincial university; his boldest ambition at that time was

to become, not a poet, but a second Professor Wünsch. Kleist was in Berlin during 1800 and 1801, but his interests were in technical studies and philosophy; he saw nothing, apparently, of the Romanticists; even an occasional visit to the Jewish salons seems to have been prompted by scientific inquiry.³³ He saw Paris, in 1801, still with the eye of Rousseau, and seems not to have observed Napoleon; he did not feel the effects of the Kantian philosophy until twenty years after the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the first shock of which had passed by others of his generation at a younger and less vulnerable age. The unguided "Autodidakt" who took Kant, or a part of Kant, with such passionate literalness in 1801, was behind the times in German philosophy. Overwhelmed by the results of an unsystematic and partial study, he did not go on, with his age, to Fichte, where he would have found comfort, but sank into solitary despair. Kleist was at the height of his rationalistic period during the years when the *Athenäum* was reducing the last degenerate stages of Rationalism to the ridiculous; the editor of *Phöbus* was still immersed in aesthetic cosmopolitanism five years after Friedrich Schlegel in *Europa* had turned to patriotic interests; and how strange that Kleist, having awakened to patriotism, had nothing to do with Fichte! Again and again Kleist appears

belated and misplaced in the development of his age, and that vast fortuitousness of life which he summed up in the charitable phrase, "die gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt," is nowhere more tragically illustrated than in his own career.

VIII

Three Early Romanticists

HÖLDERLIN

KLEIST'S coherence with his times and his misplacement in them can be elucidated by comparison with three great early Romanticists whose literary careers ended almost before his began: for Novalis' life and Hölderlin's sanity came to an end at about the time when Friedrich Schlegel relinquished the poetic ideals of his youth.

Hölderlin shares with Kleist a position intermediate between the Classicists and the later Romanticists; these two men cannot be called either "Classic" or "Romantic" according to the conventional connotations of these terms. Neither Hölderlin nor Kleist, though each had relations with individual Classicists and Romantics, identified himself expressly with any literary group, or defined his position through programmatic confessions of faith. Neither received adequate recognition until a century after his death; neither was claimed, during his lifetime, as a member of any "school." Their literary lives ended in their early thirties, and have, like early Romanticism, the character of youth and incomplete attainment. They were of musical nature, and

engaged practically in that art. Musical elements have been distinguished in the works of both: not a pretty, external melodiousness such as Tieck cultivated, but a passionate inner rhythm akin to that of their great contemporary, Beethoven, whom they resemble also in their high-strung, demonic nature and in the tragic heroism of their lives and art.

Hölderlin was as intensely devoted to the ideal of ancient classicism as were the young Schlegels or Goethe and Schiller. He was a profound student of Greek poetry and an ardent lover of Greek humanity. His chief work, *Hyperion*, is essentially a pouring forth of the German "Sehnsucht nach den Griechen"; it is perhaps the most beautiful elegy on Hellenism in all German literature. Hölderlin struggled, like all the great writers of his time, with the problem of uniting the ancient and the modern, the objective and the subjective. He believed his age to be vacillating between the two extremes of formlessness and blind subjection to antique forms.¹ Though himself a classicist in the purest sense of the word, he was opposed to the derivation of poetic principles exclusively from the Greeks.² Like his later fellow-countryman, Mörike, he aimed, in lyric and epic works, at that conciliation of restrained classic form and modern, individual feeling which early Romantic theory demanded and which Heinrich von Kleist's drama virtually achieved. Hölderlin's poems

represent the renewal of the Greek lyric which A. W. Schlegel had in mind, and one should have expected Schlegel to hail him with enthusiasm, instead of being drawn to the far less congenial Tieck.³

Hölderlin had Goethe's classical delight in the day, in beautiful reality and the eye that beholds it; he had also, like Kleist and Novalis, a love of night and infinity, a constant longing for boundless space.⁴ He shared with Kleist and his complex generation the consciousness of inner disharmony and the longing for unity of life. Even as a youth, he sang hymns to "Peace" and "Quiet." He wrote to his sister: "Ich habe in mir ein so tiefes, dringendes Bedürfnis nach Ruhe und Stille,"⁵ just as Kleist wrote to Wilhelmine: "Ach, ich sehne mich unaussprechlich nach Ruhe."⁶ Like Kleist and Friedrich Schlegel, Hölderlin looked with adoration and longing upon those blessed beings who possessed that equanimity and calm which he so passionately sought. He, also, found this ideal personified in a woman, in Diotima, "sie, die um und um so innig Eines ist, Ein göttlich ungeteiltes Leben."⁷ Like Kleist's Käthchen, she is perfectly at peace with herself and the world, and naïvely unconscious of her own perfection.⁸ Her presence pacifies the poet's agitated soul; "wie die Woge des Ozeans das Gestade seliger Inseln, so umflutete mein ruheloses Herz den Frieden des himmlischen Mädchens."⁹

Kleist might have written Hölderlin's line: "Denn traun! ein Rätsel ist des Menschen Herz."¹⁰ Harassed by inner discord, Hölderlin, like Kleist, conceived the Roussellian idea of becoming a peasant, though in reality that existence would not have satisfied either of them. Very like Kleist's triadic ideals of simple life¹¹ are Hölderlin's youthful wishes:

Oft deucht uns auch im engbeschränkten Kreise
Ein Freund, ein Hüttchen und ein liebes Weib
Zu aller Wünsche Sättigung genug.¹²

Hölderlin suffered, like Kleist, from his lack of adjustment to his time, from the disparity between his ideals and his outer life. He was, like Kleist, loyally devoted to his family, and eager to win fame for them. But they did not understand him, nor feel his real needs; again and again they tried to thrust him into the safe obscurity of an official appointment to which he was averse, and again and again he had to defend the validity of his "inner law" against their good-natured but importunate incomprehension. "O ihr Erinnyen mit eurer Liebe!" cried Kleist in such a crisis,¹³ and Hölderlin wrote to his family: "Gott weiss, wie lieb mir die Meinigen sind, und wie sehr ich wünsche, nach ihrem Gefallen zu leben, aber unmöglich ist's mir, mir widersinnige, zwecklose Gesetze aufdringen zu lassen, und an einem Orte zu bleiben, wo meine besten Kräfte zu Grunde gehen würden."¹⁴

Hölderlin, too, participated in the fervid cult of friendship which luxuriated at the close of the eighteenth century. He, too, mistaking friendship for love, entered a premature engagement to a good but undistinguished girl, and they found a common ground in Schillerian sentimentality. He, too, broke off this engagement, announcing to his late-beloved that the inexorable law of genius separated his path from hers: "Der unüberwindliche Trübsinn in mir — aber lache mich nicht aus — ist . . . unbefriedigter Ehrgeiz."¹⁵ He informs his mother of his resolution never to marry, and the reasons he gives are those that moved Kleist also: "mein sonderbarer Charakter, meine Launen, mein Hang zu Projekten, und (um nur recht die Wahrheit zu sagen) mein Ehrgeiz."¹⁶

The prevailing rhythm of Hölderlin's troubled and feverish life is like Kleist's: a restless wandering back and forth across Germany, Switzerland, and France in pursuit of a poetic ideal so exalted that final despair and destruction seemed inevitable; a succession of failures and successes, of defeats and recoveries, with one or two brief periods of serenity and happy promise. There is an uncanny resemblance even in details: Kleist and Hölderlin were in France at the same time, and the mental state in which Kleist wandered to Boulogne was precisely that in which Hölderlin, "smitten by Apollo," tramped back from Bor-

deaux; only, in Hölderlin's case this state was to be permanent.

They were of their time, but beyond it; they felt an intense desire to lose themselves in their time, to write poetry directly in the service of their country, and to exchange their pens for swords. But their nation did not think it needed them, and their prophetic cries of admonition went unheard. Hölderlin, also, knew "the pure and lofty jubilation of patriotic song;"¹⁷ he, also, offered to his publisher patriotic poems which he wished printed separately, because they were of immediate concern to his country and his time.¹⁸ But he was reduced, like the Prussian poet, to the bitter realization: "Sie können mich nicht brauchen."¹⁹ Kleist, who wished in vain for a soldier's death, could have spoken the lines addressed by Hölderlin to a visionary host of his countrymen:

O nehmt mich, nehmt mich mit in die Reihen auf,
Damit ich einst nicht sterbe gemeinen Tods!²⁰

To Kleist, too, the age seemed like a mad Procrustes, who cut off the limbs of men that they might fit into a child's cradle; and like Kleist's last letters sound the words of Hölderlin: "Wo aber so beleidigt wird die göttliche Natur und ihre Künstler, ach! da ist des Lebens beste Lust hinweg, und jeder andre Stern ist besser, denn die Erde."²¹ If one allows for the difference in form of expression between the Swabian lyric poet and the Prussian dramatist, there is a remarkable

similarity, for example, between Hölderlin's song *An die Deutschen*²² and certain passages in *Die Hermannsschlacht*.

Both Hölderlin and Kleist undertook to launch a monthly periodical of a literary-aesthetic character. They began with the same sanguine hopes and great financial calculations. They wrote the same deferential letters to the leaders of German literature, soliciting contributions to their journal. And the project failed in both cases chiefly because the greatest German poets of the time remained coldly aloof.

There was in Hölderlin a rationalistic quality which made him, like Kleist, a too easy victim to philosophy. In his youth he pursued, with an intellectual insatiability like Kleist's, the study of science and recognized too late that it was not germane to his nature, that it nourished his head at the expense of his heart.²³ He shared Kleist's strong inclination toward philosophy and his un-systematic procedure with it; he, too, was greatly impressed by Kant's negation of all proofs of a supersensual world. To the young Hölderlin, philosophical abstraction, and the Kantian philosophy, in particular, was a poison which destroyed him but which he could not resist.²⁴ "Ach! wär' ich nie in eure Schulen gegangen," laments the author of *Hyperion*; "die Wissenschaft, der ich in den Schacht hinunter folgte, von der ich, jugendlich töricht, die Bestätigung mei-

ner reinen Freude erwartete, die hat mir alles verdorben.”²⁵

Both Hölderlin and Kleist studied intensely, irregularly, and alone. They were both reared in the moralistic Rationalism of the eighteenth century, and “Bildung” was their supreme ideal. “*Der Wunsch, was zu lernen, kann jeden andern Wunsch verschlingen,*” Hölderlin emphatically avers.²⁶ He recommends to his brother “Beschäftigung des denkenden Geistes” as a panacea, and proposes to exchange essays with him on such subjects as “Wie gelangt man zur wahren Zufriedenheit?”²⁷ quite in the manner in which Kleist, several years later, exchanged ethical disquisitions with his sister and fiancée. Hölderlin felt, like Kleist and Novalis, a predilection for mathematics, and he expressed a preference for association with cool rationalists, such as his friend Hegel.²⁸

Schiller, whose general and specific influence on Hölderlin was far-reaching, perceived clearly the dangers inherent in his young admirer’s dualistic nature, with its passionate subjectivity and its arid rationality.²⁹ Indeed, he seems to have seen with repugnance in his compatriot, as Goethe saw in Kleist, a certain reincarnation of his own younger self. It cannot be said that he comprehended Hölderlin’s inmost spirit better than Goethe did Kleist’s; and thus two fateful errors were committed by the poets of Weimar in their relations

with the younger generation. It must be said to Schiller's discredit, however, that he had far more reason for understanding Hölderlin than Goethe for understanding Kleist.

Hölderlin's conception of the stages in the development of human culture, as expressed in *Hyperion* and *Empedokles*, is not unlike that of Schiller or Kleist or Novalis. He, too, regards civilization as leading onward to a higher life: "Von Kinderharmonie sind einst die Völker ausgegangen, die Harmonie der Geister wird der Anfang einer neuen Weltgeschichte sein."³⁰ "Die Einfalt und Unschuld der ersten Zeit erstirbt, dass sie wiederkehre in der vollendeten Bildung, und der heilige Friede des Paradieses geht unter, dass, was nur Gabe der Natur war, wiederaufblühe, als errungenes Eigentum der Menschheit."³¹ Hölderlin anticipated with confident hope the rising of a rejuvenated and beautiful humanity.³²

Hölderlin and Kleist look forward wistfully to a golden age of fulfilment which they will not live to see, but which they are sure must come. They look for recognition and vindication to a generation yet unborn. "Ich liebe das Geschlecht der kommenden Jahrhunderte," said Hölderlin.³³ "O dann, ihr künftigen," cries his hero, "dann weilt ein wenig, wenn ihr vorüberkommt, da, wo Hyperion schläft, weilt ahnend über des vergessnen Mannes Asche, und sprechst, 'Er wäre, wie unser

einer, wär' er jetzt da.’’³⁴ ‘‘Ich denke,’’ writes the Swabian poet to a friend in words that remind one of similar proud words of Kleist, ‘‘dass wir die Dichter bis auf unsre Zeit nicht kommentieren werden, sondern dass die Sangart überhaupt wird einen anderen Charakter nehmen, und dass wir darum nicht aufkommen, weil wir, seit den Griechen, wieder anfangen, vaterländisch und natürlich, eigentlich originell zu singen.’’³⁵

Kleist and Hölderlin have, strangely combined, a strong attachment to reality and a vivid sense of the infinite, a finally overpowering longing to fly off to distant stellar spaces. Kleist might have uttered the words in *Hyperion*: ‘‘Schade, schade, dass es jetzt nicht besser zugeht unter den Menschen, sonst blieb' ich gern auf diesem guten Stern. . . . Aber . . . die heiligen Strahlen [der Sonne] ziehn, wie Pfade, die zur Heimat führen, mich an.’’³⁶ ‘‘Bald kommen ja die schönen Wintertage, wo die dunkle Erde nichts mehr ist, als die Folie des leuchtenden Himmels, da wär' es gute Zeit [zum Sterben], da blinken ohnedies gastfreundlicher die Inseln des Lichts.’’³⁷

In *Empedokles* there are frequent passages glorifying voluntary self-destruction and showing a Kleistian disposition toward suicide. To Kleist, death seemed a simple thing: ‘‘Es ist, als ob wir aus einem Zimmer in das andere gehen’’;³⁸ similarly, Empedokles declares:

Sterben? Nur ins Dunkel ists
Ein Schritt,³⁹

and in the face of dissolution, he feels an exaltation like that of Kleist's Prince:

Als wüchsen
Mir Schwingen an, so wird mir wohl und leicht.⁴⁰

Hölderlin speaks of our life on earth as a brief night.⁴¹ Diotima, in a spirit of otherworldly detachment before her death, rejoices to leave this mediocre planet and be released from her earthly prison into pristine freedom.⁴² She assures her lover: "Sterblichkeit ist Schein, ist, wie die Farben, die vor unsrem Auge zittern, wenn es lange in die Sonne sieht!"⁴³ Hölderlin, like Kleist and Novalis, regarded death as the doorway to life, as one of the beneficent phenomena of the life-process. Empedokles says:

Am Tod entzündet mir
Das Leben sich zuletzt.⁴⁴

Hyperion declares: "Der Tod ist ein Bote des Lebens"; "ohne Tod ist kein Leben";⁴⁵ and Diotima voices the same conviction in the words: "Wir sterben, um zu leben."⁴⁶

The experience of cosmic spaciousness which Kleist, after his catastrophe over Kant, expressed in letters to Rühle and Altenstein⁴⁷ and which manifests itself again in the ethereal otherworldliness of his last days;⁴⁸ the dream, so constantly alluring to him, of another life on distant stars — all this can be paralleled in Hölderlin. The endless, starry night becomes Hyperion's element;

there his soul, like Beethoven's and Kleist's, flies unfettered to the uttermost reaches of the universe: "Da flogen wir, Diotima und ich, da wanderten wir, wie Schwalben, von einem Frühling der Welt zum andern, durch der Sonne weites Gebiet und drüber hinaus, zu den andern Inseln des Himmels, an des Sirius goldne Küsten, in die Geistertale des Arcturs."⁴⁹

The measured firmness of Hölderlin's poetic forms is often thought to distinguish him, like Kleist, from the Romanticists.⁵⁰ We have seen that such forms were no less the ideal of the early Romanticists, but that, with the exception of Novalis, these men lacked the power of poetic execution. *Hyperion*, for all its emotional fervor, is a composition of concentrated unity, and its few lyric digressions are calculated and controlled.⁵¹ When Hölderlin turned from *Hyperion* to *Empedokles*, the first thing he did was to make an exact plan of the whole tragedy,⁵² and even its last torso, *Empedokles auf dem Aetna*, follows the model of Sophokles as strictly as possible. Hölderlin's lyrics likewise are limited to a few, definite forms of clearly perceptible design.

Kleist is altogether a dramatist, Hölderlin a lyricist, and they do not deny their essential natures even in their narrative works. In their respective fields they essayed a new style, which was to unite the best qualities of ancient and modern poetic art. But Hölderlin's experience of anti-

quity, like Kleist's, was not merely statuesque, but passionate, Dionysian. He wished to emphasize the Oriental element in Greek art, which the latter had disowned.⁵³ He discerned the tragic undercurrent in the Greek character and poetry, whereas Goethe and Schiller, continuing Winckelmann's magnificent bias, had confined themselves to the serene exterior, the "noble simplicity and calm grandeur" of antique sculpture. *Empedokles* and *Penthesilea* have much in common with *Iphigenie*, but they give broad room to that aspect of antiquity which, though present, is suppressed in Goethe's drama. *Empedokles* might be described as the attempt of a lyric poet to fuse the antique form of Sophokles with the modern tragedy of the individual soul; it was the same ideal that inspired Kleist; but he, by virtue of his dramatic genius, came far nearer realizing it. This ideal of a new poetry both writers pursued with passionate singleness, and they were willing to die when they had attained it.⁵⁴ The same hopes and fears, the same titanic aspiration and despair which Kleist poured into his letters of 1802 and 1803, Hölderlin sang in gentler lyric numbers:

Nur Einen Sommer gönnt, ihr Gewaltigen!
Und einen Herbst zu reifem Gesange mir!

Doch ist mir einst das Heil'ge, das am
Herzen mir liegt, das Gedicht, gelungen,
Willkommen dann, o Stille der Schattenwelt! ⁵⁵

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL

The youthful personalities of Friedrich Schlegel and Heinrich von Kleist show important similarities. Torn between conflicting duties and inclinations, unquiet and unhappy, a riddle to their families and themselves, they start, under the influence of their immediate environment, on careers uncongenial to their as yet undiscovered natures: Schlegel becomes a merchant's apprentice, and Kleist an incipient scientist. The young Friedrich Schlegel was as desirous of sedentary office, and as averse to it, as Kleist; he, too, prayed for peace, but he, too, recognized the impossibility of bearing a bourgeois yoke.⁵⁶ The restlessness of the new age is reflected in the changeful movement of his uncertain life; as late as October 1798 he speaks of himself as being in constant migration.⁵⁷ Dresden and Paris were important stages of this migration, as they were for Kleist's. The description of Dresden and of his experiences there, which opens his new periodical, *Europa* (I, 1, p. 5), could have been written by Kleist himself. Here he met for the first time natural beauty and impressive works of art; here he moved for the first time in a sympathetic human circle. To him, as well as to Kleist, the Sistine Madonna and the church music in Dresden first revealed the charm of Catholic art and religion. It is but natural, considering their common provenience,

that Kleist's views on art, following his experience with Kant, should have been like those of the Romanticists. For him, as for Wackenroder, Raphael, the "divine," was the prince of painters, whom he strove to emulate in another art;⁵⁸ and there are not a few correspondences between Kleist's theoretical letters on art and literature and the views expressed in the *Herzensergiesungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*.

Friedrich Schlegel's early letters to his brother are a touching record of the struggles of an intellectually and morally honest nature to overcome its own inner dissonances. Schlegel, like Kleist, was troubled by the antitheses of head and heart, of inward impulse and outward compulsion; he was full of incongruities and conscious of being so; he knew that he did not fit into the bourgeois world and he was ill at ease in society. The mental state of these young men was incalculable, chaotic; yet they were extremely ambitious, and intelligent enough to realize that their ambition was thwarted by the lack of harmony in their personal endowment. To the young Friedrich Schlegel, as well as to Kleist, death seemed the constant refrain of life; and the thought of suicide is frequent in his letters;⁵⁹ to his brother he confesses on November 21, 1792, "Seit fast drei Jahren ist der Selbstmord täglicher Gedanke bei mir: ich verschob ihn, weil ich einsah, dass ich unvollendet und es also zu früh sei;"⁶⁰ there were

moments when he, like Kleist, seemed to himself "vollendet" and "zum Tode reif." But the youth who wrote "ein Mann muss sterben, ehe er eine Unwürdigkeit tut; aber es gibt auch *Unwürdigkeiten des Leidens*,"⁶¹ was yet to make his compromise with the world, whereas Kleist ended all too consistently. Schlegel's entire emotional life is filled with the passionate longing for inner calm and equilibrium.⁶² He, like Kleist, looks yearningly at those happy natures who do not know such dissonances; Brockes was such a one, and that is why he made such a marked impression on Kleist, as Caroline did on Schlegel.

Friedrich Schlegel's letters to his publishers show a side of his literary personality that is similar to Kleist's; and his youthful epistles to his brother are often written in the same strain as those of Kleist to Ulrike. They both participated in the emotionalism of an age which injected into friendship much of the passionateness of love. Friedrich Schlegel recognized between these two relationships a difference only of degree and not of kind, and he and Schleiermacher spoke of their friendship as "Ehe."⁶³ In glowing words young Schlegel describes a reunion with his friend Schweinitz: "Ich liebe und werde geliebt. Heiliges Geheimnis! Warum weine ich itzt zum zweitenmale in meinem Leben? Warum würde ich so gern mein Blut für ihn vergiessen?"⁶⁴ In the fervid letters which Kleist wrote to his friends,

and Wackenroder to Tieck, there are likewise passages which invite pathological interpretation.

Friedrich Schlegel, like Kleist, received from the eighteenth century not only its sentimentality but its rationalism. Schlegel's life, too, was for a time dominated by the ideas of the "Aufklärung," and his French biographer speaks of an absorption of his heart by his intellect.⁶⁵ To the young Friedrich Schlegel, as well as to the student of Frankfurt, reason seemed man's noblest power and the exercise of it the higher life; reason is a fundamental instinct that unites us with the Eternal.⁶⁶ Both youths were zealous and omnivorous self-teachers. Both were shaken by Kant's philosophy, but Friedrich Schlegel less tragically. Both continued to take an interest in this philosophy and aspired to lecture on it in Dresden and Paris; Friedrich Schlegel, in fact, planned nothing less than a rectification and completion of Kant's doctrine.⁶⁷

Friedrich Schlegel's intellect, like Kleist's, was fond of pursuing a thought remorselessly to its last consequences;⁶⁸ his power of abstraction interfered, like Schiller's, with his power of imagination and naïve enjoyment; and he possessed, like Kleist, the "melancholy clarity" of vision that probed persistently beneath the surface of things. The author of the essay *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* speaks with the optimism of eighteenth-century Rationalism: "Der lenkende

Verstand mag sich, so lange er unerfahren ist, noch so oft selbst schaden: es muss eine Zeit kommen, wo er alle seine Fehler reichlich ersetzen wird. Die blinde Übermacht muss endlich dem verständigen Gegner unterliegen.”⁶⁹ Consequently both youths were unconditionally devoted to “Bildung”; to them man’s foremost duty is the development of his own individuality and his greatest happiness the contemplation of his own moral perfection. They both, however, emerge from this one-sided rationalism; chiefly through a sudden tragic experience, in the case of Kleist, and in Friedrich Schlegel’s case through a less violent process of growth and maturity, they come to a new appreciation of the infinite and irrational forces of existence.

Kleist’s character, as well as Friedrich Schlegel’s, can be described as an individual synthesis of Rationalism and “Sturm und Drang.”⁷⁰ As we have observed, they share with their generation this dualism of rationality and irrationality which determines their literary character. They strive constantly, in their private lives and in their writings, to effect a reconciliation of these factors; not to subordinate one to the other, but to keep them in polar equilibrium. This was a condition extremely difficult to attain, and hence the early Romanticists hardly ever realized their ideals in poetic production.

In their estimation of woman, Friedrich Schlegel and Kleist show the transition from the ideals of the "Aufklärung" to those of the new age. In his essay *Über die Philosophie. An Dorothea*⁷¹ Schlegel sets down, concerning woman's place in the world, doctrines very similar to those which Kleist dispensed in his early letters to Ulrike and Wilhelmine:⁷² woman is a domestic creature whose entire organization is intended for motherhood and whose highest virtue is religiosity. Man, on the other hand, is by nature the more exalted representative of the human type; he stands closer to the sciences and arts, and can rise to a higher stage of development, whereas woman's circle grows ever narrower. Even in *Lucinde* we find views of this kind: man's mission is to be active among men, to lead an heroic and public life, to strive toward eternal ends,⁷³ to become like the gods; the wife's virtue is to be the priestess of joy, to reveal the mystery of love, and, amid worthy sons and daughters, to make life a sacred festival.⁷⁴ All this is not so very different from the old-fashioned conception of womanhood which the Romanticists believed themselves to be ridiculing when they parodied with such gusto Schiller's *Würde der Frauen*.

But even while they regard woman as inferior to man in a metaphysical sense, both Friedrich Schlegel and Kleist revere her as the purer and more harmonious embodiment of humanity; in

the essay just referred to, Schlegel declares: "Ist aber die männliche Gestalt reicher, selbständiger, künstlicher und erhabener, so möchte ich die weibliche Gestalt *menschlicher* finden. In dem schönsten Manne ist die Göttlichkeit und Tierheit weit abgesonderter. In der weiblichen Gestalt ist beides verschmolzen, wie in der Menschheit selbst."⁷⁵ In woman the early Romanticists saw best exemplified that union of physical and spiritual qualities which seemed to them indispensable both for perfect humanity and perfect love. They disliked the clinging, subordinate woman of the Rationalistic-Sentimental age no less than the manish "Machtweib" of the "Sturm und Drang";⁷⁶ their ideal was a combination of womanly feeling and strength of character such as Friedrich Schlegel had in mind when he wrote his *Katechismus der Vernunft für edle Frauen*. Friedrich Schlegel demanded not only "sanfte Männlichkeit" but also "selbständige Weiblichkeit."

It is significant that Kleist personified in two women, Käthchen and Penthesilea, the anguish and glory of his poet's soul.⁷⁷ From the pale and ineffectual Gertrud and Eustache in *Die Familie Schroffenstein* to the Marquise and to Natalie in *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* one can follow the poet's development from the old to the new ideal, a development which parallels that of Friedrich Schlegel and the early Romanticists. The Romantic conception of love, based on a profound

belief in the sacredness of individuality, and the Romantic conception of womanhood as combining sweet femininity with spiritual independence, are nowhere more finely illustrated than in the heroine of Kleist's last play.

NOVALIS

Novalis, like Kleist, was the scion of a noble line grown old in the service of the government, and he, too, was expected, as a matter of family tradition, to prepare himself for an official activity, which would hardly have contented him. His case shows, though less poignantly than Kleist's, what happens when a genius appears, unexpectedly, in such a family; when, as Arnim said, "poetical talent breaks through the old Prussian uniform."⁷⁸ Novalis, like Kleist, served an apprenticeship to an official career. Novalis might have become a director of mines, and Kleist a professor of science, had each not suffered, in his youth, a great calamity: in Kleist's case, it was a philosophical revelation, in Novalis', the death of a beloved girl. This experience wrecked their seemingly indestructible cosmos, but it conveyed to them a new sense of infinity and tragedy, and turned them from a mediocre and obscure career to the tragic existence of a great poet. The words in which Just speaks of his young friend's catastrophe are singularly applicable to Kleist's: "Hiermit schien sein Lebensplan vernichtet. Er

war es aber nicht, sondern nahm nur einen Umweg, eine andere Richtung.”⁷⁹ But this new tragic destiny seems more in accord with their true natures than their premature serenity had been; death and tragedy seemed to have marked them early. Schleiermacher said of Novalis: “Er war nicht sowohl durch sein Schicksal als durch sein ganzes Wesen für diese Erde eine tragische Person, ein dem Tod Geweihter. Und selbst sein Schicksal scheint mir mit seinem Wesen zusammenzuhängen.”⁸⁰

Like Kleist, Novalis in his youth was enthusiastic for Schiller and his heroes, but came to regard Goethe as the greatest of German poets. Like Kleist, he studied Kant and the critical philosophy.⁸¹ Like Kleist, he turned to patriotism and wrote poems to Queen Louise and her husband; his enthusiasm was more personal than political, and partook of the nature of hero-worship. His ideals, like Kleist's, were literary fame and quiet domesticity.⁸² Like Kleist and others of the new generation, he was restless, nervous, and tense, and he longed for peace and relaxation. “Ruhe” is the cry of his soul, like Kleist's.⁸³ “Warum,” he laments, “muss ich nur alles peinlich treiben, nichts ruhig, mit Musse, gelassen?”⁸⁴

Of Novalis it could be said, as Marie von Kleist said of her cousin, that he was a composite of extraordinary contradictions.⁸⁵ He seemed to combine the qualities of a staid bourgeois and an

eccentric genius. He was a poet of metaphysical craving and of attachment to mundane reality, of religious adoration and sensuous delight; a saint and an epicure; a dreamer and a reasoner; a devout child and a superior, penetrating critic; now lost in purely abstract mathematical speculation, and then again busied, like Kleist, with the project of a publishing establishment which should assure to him and his friends the profits of their literary labors.⁸⁶ In his notebooks we find deep mystical intuitions side by side with such practical devices as double windows to keep rooms warm, or pious meditations followed by the remark that he has once again overeaten. In his poems, ascetic spirituality gives place at times to frank sensuality and even coarseness.⁸⁷

Both Kleist and Novalis represent a rare combination of "Diesseitigkeit" and "Jenseitstrieb." They have a powerful yearning for death and for other stars, and yet a realistic love of life on earth; they feel themselves to be citizens of another world, yet they continue with cheerful resignation to pay this earth tribute. Kleist wishes to die and constantly nurses the thought of suicide, alone or in company; yet he clings to his life, "das allerqualvollste, das je ein Mensch geführt hat,"⁸⁸ and rises with incredible resiliency and hope after each blow of fate. Novalis, who, like Kleist's Prince, has closed his account with the world and longs to leave it, discharges efficiently and punc-

tiliously the duties of a Saxon "Salinenassessor." The lover of Sophie wanted to kill himself, as Penthesilea did, by sheer thought and will; and yet when death, which he had called, appeared, he wanted to live and love anew.

Novalis could write ethereal lyrics and sober, matter-of-fact descriptions of travel; he required of the poet both inward and outward sense, introspective contemplation and sharp observation of external reality: "Der erste Schritt wird Blick nach innen, absondernde Beschauung unsers Selbst. Wer hier stehen bleibt, gerät nur halb. Der zweite Schritt muss wirksamer Blick nach aussen, selbsttätige, gehaltene Beobachtung der Aussenwelt sein." "Beinah alles Genie war bisher einseitig, Resultat einer krankhaften Konstitution. Die eine Klasse hatte zuviel äussern, die andere zuviel innern Sinn. Selten gelang der Natur ein Gleichgewicht zwischen beiden, eine vollendete genialische Konstitution."⁸⁹ Far from being lost in "Romantic subjectivity," Kleist and Novalis strove in their poetry for the same union of the objective and subjective that Friedrich Schlegel desired in theory.

Novalis shares with Kleist and others of his generation a striking dualism of rational and irrational attributes. This dualism is, as we have noted, characteristic of the early Romanticists; it reaches a tragic intensity in them, but it is found, in a less critical stage, already in the older

writers of this Classic-Romantic age: Goethe and Schiller wrote not only imaginative poetry but scientific and philosophical treatises, and the relation of reason and feeling was one of the chief problems of the period. It has been said of Friedrich Schlegel that he possessed a glowing heart and a cool head, that he was, like Schiller and Nietzsche, a mixture of poet and philosopher.⁹⁰ The same statement might be made of his friend Novalis. Tieck considered him a man to be admired and loved not only for his poetic talent but also for his extensive knowledge and his philosophical genius;⁹¹ Just spoke of his sensitive heart and his supreme intellect.⁹² Novalis, like Friedrich Schlegel, dreamed of reconciling reason and feeling and fusing them into one intellectual power. "Der Zusammenhang zwischen Denken und Fühlen muss immer sein, wir müssen ihn im Bewusstsein überall finden können. . . . Die intellektuelle Anschauung zerfällt in ihre zwei Teile, in das Gefühl und die Reflexion, denn aus diesen ist sie zusammengesetzt."⁹³

Novalis himself believed fantasy to be the chief trait of his contradictory personality, but in the estimation of his friends it appeared counterbalanced by equally strong reason,⁹⁴ and the uniting of reason and fantasy seemed to him to constitute religion.⁹⁵ After the death of Sophie, he apprehended an inordinate growth of his reason and consequent atrophy of his heart: "Die Anlage

ist unter den Anlagen meiner Natur. Weich geboren, hat mein Verstand sich nach und nach ausgedehnt und unvermerkt das Herz aus seinen Besitzungen verdrängt. Sophie gab dem Herzen den verlorenen Thron wieder. Wie leicht könnte ihr Tod dem Usurpator die Herrschaft wieder geben!"⁹⁶ Even during his most poignant grief at the death of Sophie and of his brother, his strong intellect never relinquished its supremacy.⁹⁷ Yet the author of *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* esteemed feeling as the most divine and most natural of all human powers, and believed that its cultivation would bring about the return of the golden age, when men understood and lived in harmony with nature. Thought was to him a less direct and less profound approach to the truth of nature than feeling: "Das Denken ist nur ein Traum des Fühlens, ein blassgraues, schwaches Leben."⁹⁸ It is related of Novalis that he planned to write a new hymn-book, because the religious songs of modern writers, even those of Gellert, seemed to him to contain too little fantasy, to be calculated for cold reason and not for warm and immediate emotion.⁹⁹

One does not readily imagine the keenness and power of intellect that lay behind the large, soulful, childlike eyes which look at us from the traditional portrait of Novalis. There was a period in his life, as in Kleist's and Schlegel's, when reason reigned supreme; on returning to poetry after

prolonged scientific studies he confessed to Tieck, "unter Spekulanten war ich ganz Spekulation geworden."¹⁰⁰ The author of the mystical *Hymnen an die Nacht* and the logical *Fragmente* considered it impossible and undesirable to divorce the poet and the philosopher,¹⁰¹ and it has been said that his whole poetry is the product of a rational process.¹⁰² His reason had the same inflexible tenacity as Kleist's in the pursuit of ideas. He was convinced, like Kleist, of the need of rigid self-training, of a rational "plan of life"; self-perfection, "Bildung," was his aim also. The young student starting off for Leipzig wrote, quite in the vein of that other youthful rationalist: "Ich muss mehr Festigkeit, mehr Bestimmtheit, mehr Plan, mehr Zweck mir zu erringen suchen, und dies kann ich am leichtesten durch ein strenges Studium dieser Wissenschaften erlangen. Seelenfasten in Absicht der schönen Wissenschaften und gewissenhafte Enthaltsamkeit von allem Zweckwidrigen hab' ich mir zum strengsten Gesetz gemacht."¹⁰³ It is not strange that Kreisamt mann Just puts "Konsequenz im Denken und Handeln" first in the order of his young friend's three most prominent characteristics.¹⁰⁴

One fails to gain from the perusal of Novalis' writings the impression of formlessness, haziness, and confusion which is alleged to be so typical of Romantic literature. In his fragments and letters one finds lucidity and reason, and not only the

flash but the steady glow of intellect. In the crystalline transparency of the *Hymnen an die Nacht* there is no playing with forms and moods, no jingling of pretty bells, no arbitrary vagueness. And Heinrich von Ofterdingen appears on closer view, even with Klingsohr's mystical "Märchen," to be not a work of wayward fancy, but a well-ordered and meaningful composition that corresponds closely to its author's intention. In other words, Novalis' works are remarkably free from those faults which can be so abundantly illustrated from the works of Tieck.

Novalis was all his life a severe taskmaster and critic of himself. His self-examination and self-accusation, his habit of making plans and plans, remind one of Otto Ludwig. He set himself definite work to do in case of sickness, and disposed of the hours of his day to the minutest detail.¹⁰⁵ He is said to have displayed a great aptitude for business; his superior tells of his doing work over two or three times in order to get it into the best commercial form, of his making long lists of synonyms and antonyms for the sake of attaining precision and variety in business style, of his conscientious performance of the slightest and lowest of his official duties.¹⁰⁶ Even as a lover, Novalis, like Kleist, was a rationalist. What cruel clarity, what dispassionate materialism there is in his cold-blooded analysis of his sweetheart!¹⁰⁷ What pedantic impersonality, what train-schedule-like

exactitude in the diary entry that records one of his earliest visits to Sophie's beloved Grüningen!¹⁰⁸ And the didactic letters which Kleist wrote to Wilhelmine could not exceed in prosaic homeliness Novalis' poem *Charakter meiner künftigen Frau.*¹⁰⁹

In Novalis' library there were almost as many books on science as on literature,¹¹⁰ and his life, like Kleist's, can be divided into a rational-scientific and a poetic period. He studied physics, philosophy, and psychology for years, and his observations in these fields seem not to have been without scientific value; he was well versed in mathematics, chemistry, and mechanics, especially in mining.¹¹¹ His writings, like Kleist's, bear traces of his extensive study of science. With a catholicity of intellect like Kleist's he excluded no field of human knowledge from his investigation; he wished to study all sciences and make one science of them; he planned to write a scientific bible and to give lectures on science, as Kleist actually did.¹¹² He says deliberately: "Jetzt will ich alle Wissenschaften speziell durchgehen und Materialien zur Enzyklopädistik sammeln. Erst die mathematischen, dann die übrigen; die Philosophie, Moral usw. zuletzt."¹¹³ And his notebooks of fragments prove that he made an appreciable beginning on this ambitious scheme. Like Kleist, he loved music and had some training in it; musical spirit and symphonic structure have

been ascribed to his *Hymnen an die Nacht*.¹¹⁴ Like Kleist, he was greatly interested in mathematics. Between music and mathematics both seem to have recognized a kinship; perhaps because of the immaterial purity and abstractness of these spheres, which appealed, as avenues to infinity, to the Romantic soul; Novalis says, "Aller Genuss ist musikalisch, mithin mathematisch."¹¹⁵ Kleist would probably have subscribed to the statements, "Das Leben der Götter ist Mathematik. . . . Reine Mathematik ist Religion. . . . Wer ein mathematisches Buch nicht mit Andacht ergreift, und es wie Gottes Wort liest, der versteht es nicht."¹¹⁶

Novalis and Kleist were impressed and influenced by the same developments in contemporary medicine and natural science; in particular, Ritter had an effect on Novalis comparable to that of Schubert on Kleist. Their methods in scientific work were those of the amateur and dilettante, operating with imaginative hypotheses rather than with patiently gathered data. This method was typical of the scientific or pseudo-scientific activity of the age, and there is no appreciable difference on this score between Classicists and Romanticists. It is interesting to observe that Alexander von Humboldt was disqualified as a scientist in Goethe's and Schiller's eyes for the very merit which posterity esteems in him: his exact empirical investigation.¹¹⁷ The Romanticists agreed with Goethe in opposing Newton,

who had "stripped nature of her gods" and reduced the divine harmony of the universe to the action and reaction of mechanical forces. Novalis regarded Goethe as the foremost physicist of his age and as marking an epoch in the history of physics.¹¹⁸

Novalis, like Kleist, found a metaphysical solace in the study of science. Kleist, in a mood of personal and public dejection in Königsberg, seeks comfort in scientific work,¹¹⁹ and Novalis in his bereavement experiences "the wondrous healing powers" of the sciences: "Sie stillen wie Opiate die Schmerzen und erheben uns in Sphären, die ein ewiger Sonnenschein umgibt. Sie sind die schönste Freistätte, die uns vergönnt ward. . . . Es mag mir begegnen, was will — die Wissenschaften bleiben mir, mit ihnen hoff ich alles Ungemach im Leben zu überstehen."¹²⁰ Science satisfied the metaphysical craving of Kleist and Novalis; it offered them an access to another world to which they felt themselves irresistibly drawn. "Die Wissenschaften gewinnen ein höheres Interesse für mich," writes Novalis in the period of his most intense desire for death, "denn ich studiere sie nach höheren Zwecken, von einem höheren Standpunkte"; that is, as previous indications make clear, these studies are for him a means of withdrawal from life.¹²¹

H. A. Korff, in a very suggestive little book entitled *Humanismus und Romantik*,¹²² states as the

quintessence of Romantic "Weltanschauung" the view that the poet is the paragon of humanity because he has freed himself from the deception of the world of appearances and sees everywhere behind sensuous surfaces the supersensuous significance of things. Kleist, like Novalis, sought in science final, metaphysical truth; hence he was so tragically shaken by the recognition, gained from the study of Kant, that absolute knowledge is inaccessible to us on earth. Kleist, like Novalis, was a philosopher as well as a poet, an insatiable thinker who found it impossible to stop at exteriors, however beautiful, but probed always into ultimate causes and meanings.¹²³ Superficial beauty and typical reality were not the artistic ideal of Kleist and the rationally endowed early Romanticists; they strove instead for individual and characteristic truth.

Their remorseless rationality turned also upon itself: Kleist shares with Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel an unhappy bent toward self-analysis, of which his very earliest letters give evidence.¹²⁴ "Der erste Blick flog in die weite Natur, der zweite schlüpft heimlich in unser innerstes Bewusstsein,"¹²⁵ expresses a characteristic attitude in words very like Novalis'. This attitude of self-scrutiny was typical of the religious movement of the eighteenth century; it can be seen, for example, in Moritz' *Anton Reiser*, in Lavater's *Geheimes Tagebuch* and in Goethe's *Bekenntnisse einer*

schönen Seele; here also, then, the Romanticists merely enhanced a tendency of their predecessors. Even after his experience with Kant, Kleist regards self-consciousness as indispensable to happiness, and yet finds his happiest moments to be those in which he can forget himself.¹²⁶ Novalis' diary¹²⁷ betrays an even higher degree of morbid introspection: every thought, every emotion, every degree of emotion is here set down; every lapse from his purpose to die, every symptom of his re-crudescence joy in living, is mercilessly recorded; one must conceive Novalis' life at this time to have been self-conscious to the verge of insanity. He recognized, as sharply as the author of *Über das Marionettentheater*, the dangers of this excessive reflection upon himself.¹²⁸ But it had become more or less habitual to this age of "intellektuelle Anschauung," and it is one of the causes of "Romantic irony."

In fact, it was an intensification of Fichtean doctrine that led Novalis to his peculiar theory of the mastery of the mind over the body. It was his belief that, just as we command our mental organs and express this activity in gestures, so we can learn to control the inner, ordinarily involuntary organs of our bodies. Man would then become wholly independent of nature, he would be able to restore lost members by mere force of will, and separate himself from his body whenever he saw fit.¹²⁹ Novalis himself fully expected to die

in this fashion after his beloved, and Kleist's Penthesilea does in fact do so. Whether Kleist knew of Novalis' resolution is doubtful. Kleist's name, of course, does not occur in Novalis' letters; and Novalis is mentioned by Kleist only once, in a manner which indicates knowledge of the younger poet's literary fame and of the prestige his name would bring to *Phöbus*,¹³⁰ but which hardly supports the supposition of an intimate acquaintance with his works.¹³¹ This idea of death through will occurs also in writings of Goethe and Jean Paul; it is more or less symptomatic of the philosophical temper of the age in which Kleist, however isolated, could not but participate. Kleist's ecstatic, transcendental state in the last days of his life seems like an illustration of Novalis' growing conviction that ecstasy is the criterion of human power and of the effectiveness of human will.¹³²

Novalis was, like Kleist, excessively preoccupied with problems of sexuality; even his cult of death, like Kleist's, contains a large erotic element. One need only compare the phraseology and imagery of Kleist's last letters with those of parts of the *Hymnen an die Nacht* or *Das Lied der Toten* to distinguish this peculiar blending of love and death. Novalis entertained the project of a novel which would have been strangely like Kleist's actual end,¹³³ and Heinrich and Mathilde in *Ofterdingen* conceive the possibility that their love may become a door to death.¹³⁴ Kleist writes, in a state

of "perfect bliss" a few days before his death: "Meine liebste Marie, wenn Du wüsstest, wie der Tod und die Liebe sich abwechseln, um diese letzten Augenblicke meines Lebens mit Blumen, himmlischen und irdischen, zu bekränzen, gewiss, Du würdest mich gern sterben lassen.... Ein Strudel von nie empfundener Seligkeit hat mich ergriffen, und ich kann Dir nicht leugnen, dass mir ihr [*i. e.*, Henriettens] Grab lieber ist als die Betten aller Kaiserinnen der Welt."¹³⁵ In a similar spirit Novalis had written: "Verbindung, die auch für den Tod geschlossen ist, ist eine Hochzeit, die uns eine Genossin für die Nacht gibt. Im Tode ist die Liebe am süssesten; für den Liebenden ist der Tod eine Brautnacht, ein Geheimnis süsser Mysterien."

Ist es nicht klug für die Nacht ein geselliges Lager zu suchen? Darum ist klüglich gesinnt — der auch Entschlummerte liebt.¹³⁶

Kleist's and Novalis' conception of love, which reached such extremes of Romanticism, began, like Friedrich Schlegel's, in the Rationalism of the eighteenth century. They regarded women as indubitably secondary in the hierarchy of creation, addicted to the mediocre and trifling, and inferior to men in all mental capacities. The morality of women is based on feeling, that of men on reason; women resemble children, even plants; their sphere is very limited, and they are connected only through their husbands with the momentous life

of the world.¹³⁷ And yet on the other hand what idealization of womanhood in the poetic works of these men! They both were in love, not with their fiancées, but with a poetic ideal of them; they seemed attracted to these simple girls by their very simplicity; here was material with which the poets' creative powers could work. Kleist's sober reason did not deceive itself as to the mediocrity of Wilhelmine, and Novalis well knew, as his cool diagnosis shows, that Sophie was a crude, illiterate child with a mentality below her years. But what a transfigured being is Käthchen, or Alcmene, or the angelic love of Novalis' lyrics! Thus, even as lovers, these poets reveal their characteristic dualism of critical reason and emotional fantasy.

IX

Christianity, Death, and the Life Beyond

THE German Romantic movement shows an increasingly intimate relation to the Christian religion. Almost all the Romanticists in the later course of their development drew closer to Christianity,¹ and quite a number of them turned, or returned, to Catholicism; but the tendency which they thus manifested can be found in the earliest stages of Romanticism. It may be said that Romantic poetry is necessarily connected with Christianity by an inner homogeneity of principle.² In so far as it is an emotional reaction against the one-sided "Aufklärung" it brings about a deepening of the stream of religious feeling, which had flowed so sparingly during the previous age. The view expressed by the youthful rationalist Kleist in a letter to his sister is typical of maturer thought in the period following Wolff and Lessing: "*Etwas* muss dem Menschen heilig sein. Uns beiden, denen es die Zeremonien der Religion . . . nicht sind, müssen um so mehr die Gesetze der Vernunft heilig sein."³ The worship of reason had to a large extent supplanted the emotions of religious experience.

The generation of Goethe and Schiller, who stood as yet so nearly under the shadow of the rationalistic movement, did not gain an intimate relationship to Christianity;⁴ Goethe's strong attachment to tangible reality and Schiller's enthusiasm for the gods of Greece had little in common with the spirit of Christianity. This was one of the chief reasons why Friedrich Schlegel turned against the idol of his youth: as early as 1797 he had noted, "Goethe ist ohne Wort Gottes," and after his own conversion we are not surprised to hear him say, "Goethe ist ein *epischer* Dichter, der aber aus Unglauben an die Mythologie nicht zur rechten Freude hat gelangen können und sich daher in die andern Dichtarten zersplitterte"; "*Die Poesie des Unglaubens* ist nun einmal durch Goethe und Schiller erschöpft."⁵ Goethe, for his part, took an increasing dislike to Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion*, those important monuments of the Romantic revival of religious feeling, just as he voiced a decided aversion to the Neo-Catholic tendency of later Romantic art. He never forgave Friedrich Schlegel his conversion to Catholicism. In fact, one might ascribe Goethe's gradual estrangement from Romanticism to its accentuated Christian and Catholic trend.

Heinrich von Kleist progressed with his age from a non-metaphysical and individualistic to a metaphysical and over-individualistic philosophy

of life, and consequently approached Christianity.⁶ The effect of Kant's philosophy on him was not materially different from its effect on his age as a whole; in his anti-rational influence, the greatest Rationalist became, strangely enough, not the opponent, but the ally of Rousseau, the apostle of emotionality. As a youth, Kleist speaks on religious matters wholly with the convictions and in the language of the age of Enlightenment: he is concerned only with his earthly destiny and his ethical relation to his fellows; he professes a reasonable tolerance and a relativism worthy of Lessing; he feels only hostility and scorn for the ceremonies of Catholicism.⁷ In his pre-Kantian period, Kleist is decidedly "diesseitig"; he disparages those who live in the future, forgetting the present and pondering on the infinite and metaphysical instead of the earthly concerns to which God has so evidently limited them:⁸ "Ich schränke mich daher mit meiner Tätigkeit ganz für dieses Erdenleben ein.... Ich fühle mich ruhiger und sicherer, wenn ich den Gedanken an die dunkle Bestimmung der Zukunft ganz von mir entferne, und mich allein an die gewisse und deutliche Bestimmung für dieses Erdenleben halte."⁹ The man who wrote these words agreed completely with the gospel of Faust:

Nach drüben ist die Aussicht uns verrannt;
Tor, wer dorthin die Augen blinzelnd richtet,
Sich über Wolken seinesgleichen dichtet!
Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um. (11442-11445)

Then Kleist meets with a disaster which marks the death of the pitifully limited rationalist and the birth of the tragic poet. He, who with confident devotion to reality had glorified man and his sovereign intellect, now gains for the first time a perception of the irrational and tragic, of the insignificance and helplessness of man in the face of the infinite. His mind is opened not only to Romanticism, but also to Christianity. We see in him henceforth no longer a single-minded "Aufklärer," but a Romanticist, tragically conscious of inner dualism and longingly intent on a higher synthesis.

The appraising rationalist had stared with childish incomprehension at the paintings in the Dresden gallery;¹⁰ eight months later the nascent poet appreciates all these works of art emotionally, and enters a new world of beauty in which Wackenroder had preceded him.¹¹ In the spirit of Schiller's Mortimer and of his own later legend of St. Cecilia, he writes: "Nirgends fand ich mich aber tiefer in meinem Innersten gerührt, als in der katholischen Kirche, wo die grösste, erhabenste Musik noch zu den anderen Künsten tritt, das Herz gewaltsam zu bewegen. Ach, Wilhelmine, unser Gottesdienst ist keiner. Er spricht nur zu dem kalten Verstande, aber zu allen Sinnen ein katholisches Fest. Mitten vor dem Altar, an seinen untersten Stufen, kniete jedesmal, ganz isoliert von den andern, ein gemeiner Mensch,

das Haupt auf die höheren Stufen gebückt, betend mit Inbrunst. Ihn quälte kein Zweifel, er *glaubt* — Ich hatte eine unbeschreibliche Sehnsucht, mich neben ihn niederzuwerfen, und zu weinen — Ach, nur einen Tropfen Vergessenheit,¹² und mit Wollust würde ich katholisch werden.”¹² Had it not been for his strong loyalty to family tradition, we may believe that Kleist would, like Friedrich Schlegel, have taken refuge in the bosom of the ancient church. He visits the gallery daily, and each time stands for hours in adoration before Raphael’s Madonna, “jener Mutter Gottes, mit dem hohen Ernste, mit der stillen Grösse”; he longs to become himself an artist and to live in unquestioning belief.¹³ Six years later, in another period of misfortune, Kleist is again deeply moved, as the Romanticists were, by the pictorial representation of Christian faith; the words in which he describes Simon Vouet’s painting of a dying saint could — even to the detail of higher valuation of emotional effect than of technical skill — have been written by the author of the *Herzensergiessungen*.¹⁴

There is doubtless a considerable element of Christian doctrine in that most contradictory of Kleist’s works, *Amphitryon*. Adam Müller and Goethe took it to be a poetic symbolization of the virgin conception of Christ, and there is some basis for this supposition, on the ground not only of general analogy but also of the direct or indirect

use of Biblical diction.¹⁵ Perhaps it was this Christian import in *Amphitryon* which led Kleist to speak of the play as a comedy; according to any other interpretation, Alcmene's fate must appear as stark tragedy. At any rate, there is no record that Kleist ever contradicted the Catholic exegesis with which Müller sent his play into the world, nor can it be questioned that the element which the convert so eagerly exploited is the chief cause of the disunity of Kleist's work.

It is possible to see a suggestion of the dogma of the immaculate conception in *Käthchen von Heilbronn*¹⁶ and a certain similarity between the fate of Alcmene and that of Käthchen's mother; the Marquise has also been drawn into the comparison.¹⁷ The idealization, in *Käthchen*, of the Catholic middle ages and their simple faith, is quite in the vein of later Romanticism. There is an appreciable amount of Christian influence, both pictorial and literary, in *Phöbus*, in which Kleist was associated with Müller and Ferdinand Hartmann; the pure and devout Christianity which inspired Kleist's poem *Der Engel am Grab des Herrn*¹⁸ was very gratifying to Müller, who found in it an approach to the Christian allegory of Romantic poetry.¹⁹ It is noteworthy that Kleist's most important essay, *Über das Marionettentheater*, is couched in terms of Christian mythology, and that Catholicism is a more or less prominent feature in *Das Erdbeben von Chili*, *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, and *Der Findling*.²⁰

A remarkable document for the increase of Kleist's religiosity toward the end of his life is *Die heilige Cäcilie oder die Gewalt der Musik*,²¹ a story of unmistakably Catholic tendency, in which church music is glorified and everything is calculated to enhance the impression of the miraculous. The "christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft" in Berlin, of which Arnim and Müller were the founders and Brentano the secretary, purposed, as its name implies, to foster the ideals of Christianity and nationalism.²² Kleist was an active member, and the *Gebet des Zoroaster*²³ with which he opened his *Abendblätter* is representative, not only in its Biblical phraseology but in its masked patriotic intent, of the group to which Kleist belonged.

An influence similar to Müller's was exerted on Kleist at the close of his life by Henriette Vogel, who seems to have been connected with the circle of Catholic Romanticists in Berlin, and whom Kleist met, in fact, through Müller's mediation. Bülow reports that Kleist was attracted to her by their common love of music, and that their melancholy souls sympathized especially in playing and singing hymns.²⁴ A common friend testified on the day after their death to the same effect, and ascribed to them "schwärmerisch religiöse Gesinnungen."²⁵ Kleist's last letters are full of the spirit and imagery of otherworldly Christianity,²⁶ and in the "litany of death" which he com-

posed together with his comrade in suicide, this intensified religiosity reaches the stage of Catholic mysticism.²⁷

As he recovered from the philosophical catastrophe which destroyed his rationalized cosmology, Kleist seemed to resign himself to a recognition of the frailty of man and his world, which is quite in the spirit of Christianity. In various modulations this note of "die gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt" reechoes through Kleist's works. It appears as "der Wunderbau der Welt" in *Käthchen*,²⁸ as "die allgemeine Not der Welt" and "die gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt" in *Kohlhaas*;²⁹ the Marquise surrenders herself, in the face of mysterious misfortune, to "die grosse, heilige und unerklärliche Einrichtung der Welt," and her lover is finally forgiven "um der gebrechlichen Einrichtung der Welt willen."³⁰ "Der Lauf der Dinge hienieden," the distresses of this imperfect life, finally crowded Kleist out of it.³¹ Even in the antique world of Penthesilea this theme recurs: like Prinz Friedrich and Sylvester Schroffenstein, Penthesilea, awakening from her ordeal, believes herself in a better world, but is reminded that

Es ist die Welt noch, die gebrechliche,
Auf die nur fern die Götter niederschaun. (2854-2855)

"Ach, wie gebrechlich ist der Mensch, ihr Götter!" (3037) exclaims the Amazonian priestess

in words more Christian than classical. Prinz Friedrich, longing for the release of death, asks: "Schlug meiner Leiden letzte Stunde?" (1850), as though he had suffered a long martyrdom in this vale of tears. This otherworldly compassion is found, according to a recent writer, even in the comedy of the Romanticists: "In allem frohen und heiteren Scherz klingt ein Ton der Wehmut mit, der Wehmut über die Gebrochenheit oder Zerbrechlichkeit der Welt, ein Sehnen aus dieser unvollkommenen Welt heraus zu reinerem Sein, aus dem Bedingten zum Unbedingten hin."³²

"Absolute Abstraktion, Annihilation des Jetzigen, Apotheose der Zukunft, dieser eigentlichen, besseren Welt": — thus does Novalis define the nature of Christianity,³³ and in a certain sense also the attitude of early Romanticism. The first Romanticists, like Kleist, were hopeful of a kingdom to come, a golden age of literature of which Goethe marked the dawn; their poetry was, according to A. W. Schlegel, one of longing, not of possession. Kleist looked to a future stage to enact his plays; he considered himself to be merely preparing the way for a great future poet. Goethe's impatience with this ascetic renunciation of the present is sharply expressed in his letter to the author of *Penthesilea*.

Ever since he experienced, through Kant, the mundane limitation of human knowledge and human power, Kleist feels, like Novalis after his

decisive experience, a yearning for the other world; he does not fear death, but is prepared, often eager for it; it becomes part of his life-consciousness. He values earthly life more lightly, and learns to see, like that most Romantic of characters, Goethe's Faust, that "all transitory things are but symbols." "Erwarten Sie wenig von dieser Erde," he admonishes a friend, "Sie kann nichts geben, was ein reines Herz wahrhaft glücklich machen könnte. Blicken Sie zuweilen, wenn es Nacht ist, in den Himmel."³⁴

Friedrich Schlegel perceived that the difference between ancient and modern art was historically due to the influence of Christianity on the latter. A. W. Schlegel developed this idea in his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. "In der christlichen Ansicht," he says, "hat sich alles umgekehrt: die Anschauung des Unendlichen hat das Endliche vernichtet; das Leben ist zur Schattenwelt und zur Nacht geworden, und erst jenseits geht der ewige Tag des wesentlichen Daseins auf."³⁵ With the Christian-Romantic shifting of emphasis, the other world appears real and vital, and this world an unhappy dream. This was the interpretation of life in Calderón's Christian dramas, and hence Calderón could appear to Friedrich Schlegel as the most Romantic of all dramatists; for Calderón let the light of heavenly transfiguration shine over frail humanity in its earthly woes and errors.³⁶

Kleist's characters seem at times to recognize no line of demarcation between this world and the next, to project their love and hatred unabated into another existence. Thus Piachi in *Der Findling* refuses to partake of the sacrament before his execution, so that he may continue his vengeance in hell. Even in Kleist's rustic comedy *Der Zerbrochene Krug* we do not lose sight of eternity; Eve expects her burly peasant lover to trust implicitly in her innocence and await in another life the explanation of damning appearances in this:

Es wird sich alles ihr zum Ruhme lösen
Und ist's im Leben nicht, so ist es jenseits
Und wenn wir auferstehn, ist auch ein Tag.³⁷

Kleist was, like Novalis, a citizen in two worlds: he was strongly attached to the earth, yet longed to leave it. His attitude was like Schiller's, which Novalis prized so highly: the attitude of a noble stranger on earth, "dies nicht auf Erden Heimische und doch Zufriedene, nicht Klagende, Heilige, Resignierende."³⁸ A few hours before his death, Kleist admits that it is quite possible to be very happy in this world, on whose "joys" he is turning his back.³⁹ Novalis, though determined to die, writes: "Es wird mir sehr schwer werden, mich ganz von dieser Welt zu trennen;"⁴⁰ and in the *Hymns to Night*, he reveals a disposition which had become habitual to him:

Noch weckst du,
Muntres Licht,
Den Müden zur Arbeit —
Flössest fröhliches Leben mir ein . . .
Gern will ich
Die fleissigen Hände rühren,
Überall umschaun,
Wo du mich brauchst, . . .
Aber getreu der Nacht
Bleibt mein geheimes Herz.⁴¹

In Kleist's letters and in his poetic characters we note repeatedly this singular association of love of life and desire for death; to Rühle, whom like his other best friends he invited to join him in suicide, he writes: "Komm, lass uns etwas Gutes tun, und dabei sterben!" Then, after ten lines of philosophizing on the nature of death, he goes on: "Nun wieder zurück zum Leben! So lange das dauert, werd ich jetzt Trauerspiele und Lustspiele machen," etc.⁴² Like Novalis, Kleist could be active and energetic in the affairs of life at the very time when he courted death. It is characteristic of Kleist that Penthesilea, the impersonation of his soul, should feel readiest for death when she is happiest.⁴³

Kleist's poetry deals with great, significant individuals and their problems in this world. In so far he must appear "this-worldly" and classical. But just as his art shows, beside its strong individualistic bias, a collectivistic consciousness which links him with a new age, so his life and its ending show, even more clearly, an otherworldly

trend which brings him close to Christianity and Romanticism. Kleist believed no less firmly than Novalis in a future life. The truth disclosed to him by Kant destroyed forever his naïve hope of transferring, undiminished, to another planet the knowledge he had gained on this; it did not, however, destroy his belief in a better life beyond death; it did not lessen but rather increased his eagerness to embark on the great voyage of discovery which he finally undertook, not despairingly, but full of hope and exultation. Kleist was a metaphysicist from first to last.

"Ich stimme Dir bei," writes Friedrich Schlegel to Novalis, "dass das Christentum eine Religion der Zukunft [ist], wie die der Griechen eine der Vergangenheit, schon bei den Alten selbst. Aber ist sie nicht noch mehr eine Religion des Todes, wie die klassische eine Religion des Lebens . . . ? Vielleicht bist Du der erste Mensch in unserm Zeitalter, der Kunstsinn für den Tod hat. Ich glaube, dass das Christentum sich eben deswegen, und weil Tod und Leben eins sind, mit dem äussersten Realismus behandeln liesse."⁴⁴ To the religious feeling of the antique world, rejoicing in reality, death appeared as something fearful and lamentable; for the Christian, death has lost its sting and become the door to another and better existence.⁴⁵ To the poet of the *Hymnen an die Nacht*, Christ is the prince of death, the savior from life; he gave to death a new, positive meaning:

Was uns gesenkt in tiefe Traurigkeit
Zieht uns mit süsser Sehnsucht nun von hinten.
Im Tode ward das ewge Leben kund,
Du bist der Tod und machst uns erst gesund.⁴⁶

Similarly Hölderlin, who clad his Romantic longing for “the better land” in Hellenistic forms, sang of death as the passage, not from light to darkness, but from the dark light of this earth to the full radiance of the infinite. For Novalis, death is a return home; life is only a long pilgrimage to the door of death; death is not the end, but the beginning of better things: “Der Tod ist eine Selbstbesiegung, — die, wie alle Selbstüberwindung, eine neue, leichtere Existenz verschafft.”⁴⁷

Death meant to the Romanticists the satisfaction of their craving for the infinite, a mystical restoration to the original unity of life. The author of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* calls death “a higher revelation of life” and surveys his own brief existence in “these vales of trial” with a wistful compassion like that with which Kleist looked upon the frailty of the world.⁴⁸ Schleiermacher exhorts his hearers, “Versuchet doch aus Liebe zu Gott euer Leben aufzugeben.”⁴⁹ A similar idea is reechoed by Adam Müller: “Hat denn niemand die Liebe verstanden? ist denn nicht jedes Opfer, jede Hingebung eine Art von Tod? und ihr fragt noch ob es eine Todeslust gebe? und wer möchte die Lust des Lebens empfinden als um dieser Todeslust willen?”⁵⁰

Kleist, also, felt that "Sehnsucht nach dem Tode" which Novalis celebrates in one of his hymns, the longing for death as the liberation from mundane limitations into cosmic freedom. All his life he seemed, like Novalis, to stand in the shadow of death, to be ever ready for it, desirous of it. Death was to him the eternal refrain of life;⁵¹ decline and expiration, the law of the universe: "von ganzer Seele sehne ich mich, wonach die ganze Schöpfung und alle immer langsamer und langsamer rollenden Weltkörper streben, nach Ruhe!"⁵² It was the depiction of death that moved him so deeply in the painting of the dying Magdalene: "Sie liegt mit Blässe des Todes übergossen auf den Knieen, der Leib sterbend in den Armen der Engel zurückgesunken, . . . das liebliche Wesen, das der Hand des Schicksals jetzt entflohen ist. Und einen Blick aus sterbenden Augen wirft dies auf sie, als ob es in Gefilde unendlicher Seligkeit hinaus sähe. Ich habe nie etwas Rührenderes und Erhebenderes gesehen."⁵³

The thought of suicide was never absent from Kleist's mind, and the manner of his end seemed to both contemporary and later writers to bear a Romantic character.⁵⁴ From the time when, in early life, he conceived of continuation of existence on another star from the point of development reached on this, Kleist seems to stand but lightly on this earth, to feel the drawing power of infinity. Death is to him an easy transition,⁵⁵ and the men-

tion of it flows readily and joyously from his lips and from the lips of his characters: "Mir ist so wohl, wie bei dem Eintritt in ein andres Leben," says Sylvester Schroffenstein, echoing words of the poet.⁵⁶ On parting from a friend, Kleist feels himself "so friedliebend, so liebreich, wie in der Nähe einer Todesstunde."⁵⁷

Kleist's friends felt in him this strong tendency toward another world. In Adam Müller's opinion, Kleist had long regarded the thought of death as the spice of a life otherwise insipid,⁵⁸ and Fouqué wrote: "eine tiefe Todessehnsucht, eine lebenverzehrende Glut drang bedrohlich aus allen seinen Dichtungen hervor"; "die Todessehnsucht besiegte alle Freuden des Lebens."⁵⁹ Kleist possessed an extraordinary vitality which kept him not only alive but productive after catastrophes that would have ended, physically or at least spiritually, the life of most men. The concatenation of circumstances in the summer and fall of 1811, unhappy though it was, does not adequately explain his final resolution. What made the difference was that this time his recurrent "Todessehnsucht" found in Henriette Vogel the comrade he had sought all his life. This is the last and the strongest of the motives he adduces in one of his last letters to his cousin: "dass ich eine Freundin gefunden habe, deren Seele wie ein junger Adler fliegt, wie ich noch in meinem Leben nichts Ähnliches gefunden habe; die meine Traurigkeit als

eine höhere, festgewurzelte und unheilbare begreift, und deshalb . . . mit mir sterben will. . . . Du wirst begreifen, dass meine ganze jauchzende Sorge nur sein kann, einen Abgrund tief genug zu finden, um mit ihr hinab zu stürzen.”⁶⁰

Kleist could say of himself, like his Prince of Homburg or like Friedrich von Trota in *Der Zweikampf*: “Der Tod schreckt mich nicht mehr, und die Ewigkeit . . . geht wieder, wie ein Reich voll tausend glänziger Sonnen, vor mir auf. . . . Im Leben lass uns auf den Tod; und im Tode auf die Ewigkeit hinaussehen.”⁶¹ There is in the poet’s last letters a thirst for the infinite comparable only to that in Novalis’ *Hymnen an die Nacht*. He feels bliss and exaltation at the thought of plunging at last into illimitable space.⁶² His state of mind as he wrote his last letter, “zufrieden und heiter, . . . mit der ganzen Welt versöhnt,” his “Freude und unaussprechliche Heiterkeit”⁶³ is exactly like that of Prinz Friedrich, and of Kohlhaas at the end of his life.⁶⁴ “Nur so viel wisse,” writes Kleist of Henriette, “dass meine Seele, durch die Berührung mit der ihrigen, zum Tode ganz reif geworden ist; dass ich die ganze Herrlichkeit des menschlichen Gemütes an dem ihrigen ermessen habe, und dass ich sterbe, weil mir auf Erden nichts mehr zu lernen und zu erwerben übrig bleibt.”⁶⁵ The figure of ripening which Kleist uses here is significant: it suggests not a sudden compulsion, but the happy consum-

mation of slow, organic growth. Kleist's final step is, from the point of view of his "life-feeling," not a negative, but a positive action; his whole life seems to have been a gradual ripening toward death.

Kleist's estimation of life and death, like that of the Romanticists, is radically different from that of ancient classicism, and differs also from that of German Classicism in so far as the latter adopted the Greek view. The attitude toward death taken by Prinz Friedrich in the famous "fear-of-death scene" (III, 5) is quite that of the heroes of antiquity, and it is no mere accident that his words have a parallel in Homer.⁶⁶ It is enlightening, moreover, to contrast the Prince's monologue in Act IV, Scene 3, with that in Act V, Scene 10, which is of the same length, but of an entirely different character: the first is pagan, stoical, this-worldly; the second is Christian and otherworldly; the first shows the Prince loath to leave this world and doubtful of the next; the second shows him eager to leave this world and hopeful of the next; the spirit of the first soliloquy is antique, that of the second Romantic. In the interval the Prince has achieved, in the Christian sense, the conquest of death, and his pardon at the end seems a gratuitous gift to one who has already turned his back on life.

Consistently, the Prince, who has thus broken off his relations with the world and has shown such

impatience at being detained in it,⁶⁷ should express disappointment at being restored to earth at the close of the play. It seems as though it had cost the poet an effort to turn his action back from infinity to reality, and to recall his hero, already outward bound, to his earthly career. Kleist himself, under like circumstances, was not recalled, but he might have been; for in him there was the same strange duplexity of allegiance as in his Prince. Some of the most touching passages in Kleist's letters are those which testify to the unexhausted potentialities of his life: "Es weht mich zuweilen bei einer Lektüre oder im Theater wie ein Luftzug aus meiner allerfrühesten Jugend an," he writes in that depressing August of 1811, "Das Leben, das vor mir ganz öde liegt, gewinnt mit einem Male eine wunderbare herrliche Aussicht, und es regen sich Kräfte in mir, die ich ganz erstorben glaubte."⁶⁸

Both Kleist and Novalis conceived of death, not as a finality, but as a transition, a transplantation to another sphere of activity. Kleist's physical death seemed to him only one of the million deaths through which he had already passed or was yet to pass: "So wie der Schlaf, in dem wir uns erholen, etwa ein Viertel oder Drittel der Zeit dauert, da wir uns, im Wachen, ermüden, so wird, denke ich, der Tod, und aus einem ähnlichen Grunde, ein Viertel oder Drittel des Lebens dauern. Und gerade so lange braucht ein mensch-

licher Körper, um zu verwesen.⁶⁹ Und vielleicht gibt es für eine ganze Gruppe von Leben noch einen eignen Tod, wie hier für eine Gruppe von Durchwachungen (Tagen) einen.”⁷⁰ Very similar are Novalis’ speculations: “Wir springen wie ein elektrischer Funken in die andere Welt hinüber. Zunahme der Kapazität. Tod ist Verwandlung, Verdrängung des Individualprinzips, das nun eine neue, haltbarere, fähigere Verbindung eingeht.”⁷¹ “Wer hier nicht zur Vollendung gelangt, gelangt vielleicht drüben, oder muss eine abermalige irdische Laufbahn beginnen. Sollte es nicht auch drüben einen Tod geben, dessen Resultat irdische Geburt wäre?”⁷² “Lernt den Sinn des Todes fassen,” chant the spirits of the departed in Novalis’ *Lied der Toten*: death is only an incident in a never-ending flux and reformation; if mortals rightly understood death, they would embrace it and joyfully forsake this brief, pallid existence.⁷³

Here too, Herder’s fruitful ideas had anticipated those of Romanticists and Classicists alike. In the fifth of his philosophical *Discourses* Herder speaks of the “restless movement” and “eternal palingenesis” of life, and declares: “Kein Tod ist in der Schöpfung, sondern Verwandlung; Verwandlung nach dem weisesten, besten Gesetz der Notwendigkeit, nach welchem jede Kraft im Reich der Veränderungen sich immer neu, immer wirkend erhalten will und also . . . ihr organisches

Gewand unaufhörlich ändert.”⁷⁴ Goethe had the same idea in mind when he wrote, in the wonderful *Fragment über die Natur*: “Der Tod ist ihr [i. e., der Natur] Kunstgriff, viel Leben zu haben.” And like Goethe’s theory concerning the immortality of the entelechy is Novalis’ belief that the best mortals, those who in life have achieved spirituality, die only in appearance.⁷⁵ This general conception of transmutation or metempsychosis is not unlike Lessing’s; it is another of the great common possessions of the Classic-Romantic age, and its ultimate foundation is the optimistic trust of eighteenth-century Rationalism in human perfectibility.

We have seen that Kleist never abandoned his early idea of migration to another star; what he gave up was the hope of taking with him treasures of knowledge accumulated on this earth, of continuing uninterrupted the development which he had begun here. After his encounter with Kant he writes to a friend in the very same terms as before: “Wenn Sie auf diesem Sterne keinen Platz finden, der Ihrer würdig ist, so finden Sie vielleicht auf einem andern einen um so bessern.”⁷⁶ Novalis believed no less firmly in his transplantation in the vast economy of the universe: “Der Tod versetzt ihn [i. e., den Geist des Menschen] in der grossen Assoziation irgendwo anders hin . . . er wird irgendwo anders erweckt”; “wer weiss, wo wir in dem Augenblick anschies-

sen, in dem wir hier verschwinden.... Der Einfluss der Sonne macht es wohl wahrscheinlich, dass es die Sonne sein könnte, wo wir wieder abgesetzt werden.”⁷⁷ “Warst du schon einmal gestorben?” asks the pilgrim in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*; “Wie könnt’ ich denn leben?” is the answer.⁷⁸ We are reminded of the report of Count Wetter’s trance: “Die Welt nannt’ er ein Grab und das Grab eine Wiege, und meinte, er würde nun [indem er sterbe] erst geboren werden.”⁷⁹

There exists indeed in Kleist’s philosophy and poetry a mystic connection between birth and death through which he draws close to the mystic undercurrent in Romanticism, and especially to Novalis, the most Christian of the Romanticists. One may see at least the adumbration of this view at the close of *Amphitryon*, where the annihilation of Alcmene’s personality coincides with the beginning of a great new life; one may see the poetic expression of it in *Penthesilea*, where the destructive and creative functions of love so strangely interchange, where “Küssen” rimes with “Bissen,” and the idyllic festival of roses is set like a lovely miracle in the midst of a bloody battlefield. Kleist put it into the form of a distich which characterizes his own poetic art:

Lasset sein mutiges Herz gewähren! Aus der Verwesung
Reiche locket er gern Blumen der Schönheit hervor!⁸⁰

He discussed it in the form of a discursive essay in the *Abendblätter*, entitled *Wissen, Schaffen, Zerstören, Erhalten*,⁸¹ the theme of which is expressed by one of Friedrich Schlegel's aphorisms: "In der Begeisterung des Vernichtens offenbart sich zuerst der Sinn göttlicher Schöpfung. Nur in der Mitte des Todes entzündet sich der Blitz des ewigen Lebens."⁸²

Kleist observed with profound interest how in the case of his own contemporaries spiritual goodness and greatness could grow out of public calamity.⁸³ The poetic reflection of this experience can be seen in *Das Erdbeben von Chili*: amid the horrible destruction of all material things and the apparent dilapidation of Nature, the human spirit itself opens like a fair and wondrous flower.⁸⁴ The love of Jeronimo and Josephe, like that of Ottokar and Agnes in *Die Familie Schröffenstein*, gains a strange and almost morbid beauty from being set in the shadow of death. This interrelation of life and death, of flowering and decay, seems intimately akin to Christianity and to Romanticism; yet it is not absent from Goethe's works; one thinks of the poet's words as he contemplates Schiller's skull:

Als ob ein Lebensquell dem Tod entspränge,
or of the Easter-song of the angels in *Faust*:

Christ ist erstanden
Aus der Verwesung Schooss.

It is characteristic both of Kleist and of the mystical Romantic cult of death and resurrection which reached its extreme development in Zacharias Werner,⁸⁵ that the desire for death should be felt in moments of greatest happiness. This thought was expressed by Friedrich Schlegel in *Lucinde*: "Und dann weiss ich's nun, dass der Tod sich auch schön und süß fühlen lässt. Ich begreife, wie das freie Gebildete sich in der Blüte aller Kräfte nach seiner Auflösung und Freiheit mit stiller Liebe sehnen und den Gedanken der Rückkehr freudig anschauen kann, wie eine Morgensonne der Hoffnung."⁸⁶ The departure from life, at all times easy for Kleist and his characters, seems easiest from the summit of earthly bliss. In the midst of the most contented periods in Kleist's life the ominous note of death is heard: in a letter written during his happy idyll on the Swiss isle, preceded and followed by expressions of hope and attachment to the present and future, we suddenly read the words: "Kurz, ich habe keinen andern Wunsch, als zu sterben. . . . Denn das Leben hat doch immer nichts Erhabneres, als nur dieses, dass man es erhaben wegwerfen kann."⁸⁷ It is uncertain whether Kleist actually spoke the words attributed to him, "Das ist ja zum Erschiessen schön!", but they may be taken as characteristic; they express, in less elevated language, Penthesilea's desire for death in moments of greatest joy:

Zum Tode war ich nie so reif, als jetzt. (1682)

Ich bin so selig, Schwester! Überselig!
Ganz reif zum Tod, o Diana, fühl' ich mich! (2864-2865)

Kleist, having fathomed in Henriette the full glory of the human soul, feels that as a man and as a poet he has reached supreme happiness, and is ripe for death.⁸⁸ It seems as though the ultimate purpose of life were preparation for death, as though the greatest exploit of Prince Frederick in Kleist's last play were the conquest of the will to live. Death appears; not as the punishment, but as the ultimate reward of life, and human happiness, as well as human suffering, lead directly to its doors.

In a section of the lectures on dramatic art which he published in *Phöbus*,⁸⁹ Adam Müller speaks of an ideal tragedy which is to come, surpassing Greek tragedy by virtue of its religious significance. He regards Goethe's works as a preparation for this new type of tragedy, and elucidates his meaning by the example of Goethe's elegy *Euphrosyne*, in which grief is overcome by being named or comprehended. In every historical tragedy, likewise, Müller distinguishes three chief moments: the "moment of resurrection" at the beginning, the catastrophe or "higher moment of death" which is the turning-point of the action, and the "moment of assumption" at the end. From the beginning to the catastrophe the hero appears more and more tragically in-

volved in the complications of fate; from the catastrophe to the end he rises to freedom and reaches at length a balance between freedom and necessity. The Greek drama, says Müller, no longer suffices us; it contains examples of contempt of death, but not of true conquest of death. Then he quotes, most appropriately, verses from Novalis, who in his life and poetry exemplified that conquest of death and tragedy of which Müller speaks in such mystic terminology.

According to the Christian and Romantic valuation of life and death, which we have observed also in Heinrich von Kleist, tragedy, of the traditional sort, is impossible. Kluckhohn⁹⁰ consequently considers the tragedies of the middle ages and the Christian tragedy of Spain, as well as the dramas of German Romanticism, to be properly martyr-dramas or dramas of divine grace. Certainly there is ground for so classifying Kleist's *Käthchen von Heilbronn* and *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, with their benignant intercessions and their conciliatory, untragic tendency. In the course of an earlier study I took occasion to conjecture, in general coincidence with the ideas of Müller just quoted, that Kleist was aiming, theoretically in the essay on the marionettes and poetically in *Homburg*, at a new type of tragedy, in which tragedy itself was to be overcome and death conquered.⁹¹ Others have seen in *Homburg* the dramatic illustration of Müller's theories.⁹²

Whether or not one assumes an influence of Müller's militant Christianity on Kleist in Dresden and Berlin, it is possible in any case to regard Kleist's last play as the first attempt at a new form of drama which was to be neither tragedy nor comedy, but an original fusion of these two, quite in harmony with the synthetic tendency of Romanticism. One of Kleist's most congenial critics, Friedrich Hebbel, recognized in this work "eine ganz neue Gestalt der Tragödie, welche auf wunderbare Weise die tiefsten tragischen Schauer und die leisen Entzückungen einer selbst in der dunkelsten Nacht nicht ganz verlöschenden Hoffnung in einander mischt."⁹³ The catastrophe, which in the conventional drama meant the physical death of the hero, would have constituted, in the new drama, only a passing phase in his spiritual development. Death would have lost its sting and would have appeared, in the Christian and Romantic sense, not as a hopeless finality, but as the beginning of a new life. The man who speaks the beautiful lines of Act V, Scene 10, has already passed beyond the portals of death; he has overcome his love of life and fear of death and achieved immortality, like the poet who in the transcendent exaltation of his last letters looks back on life from beyond its bourns. Such a new interpretation of tragedy as we may believe Kleist to have had in mind, a sublimation of tragedy into a beneficent and purifying process,

seems more germane to our modern conception of the universe and its life than the traditional tragedy has been. The innovation in Kleist's drama, then, would appear to consist, not in its form, which is conventional enough, but in a new and distinctly modern ethical and religious content; and we might well, with Hebbel, regard it as one of the most remarkable creations of the German mind.

X

The Infinite

THE word “Unendlichkeit” and the idea for which it stands are met with everywhere in the poetic and philosophical writings of the period with which we are concerned. Strich, in fact, with more artistic than scientific truth, has based thereon his characterization of Romanticism as the antipode of Classicism. Walzel, on the other hand, has pointed out that the striving toward the infinite is by no means absent from the works of Goethe and Schiller.¹ But it cannot be denied that the early Romanticists made more of it than the Classicists; in this, as in other respects, they confirmed a propensity already inherent in Classicism.

The early Romanticists were fond of relating their abstract ideas to the infinite. “Nur durch Beziehung aufs Unendliche,” says Friedrich Schlegel, “entsteht Gehalt und Nutzen; was sich nicht darauf bezieht, ist schlechthin leer und unnütz”; “jede Beziehung des Menschen aufs Unendliche ist Religion, nämlich des Menschen in der ganzen Fülle seiner Menschheit. . . . Das Unendliche in jener Fülle gedacht ist die Gottheit”; “sättigt das Gefühl des Lebens mit der Idee des

Unendlichen und ihr werdet die Alten verstehen und die Poesie"; "die Vernunft ist frei und selbst nichts anders als ein ewiges Selbstbestimmen ins Unendliche."² At an early age, Friedrich Schlegel recognized as his dominating instinct "die Sehnsucht nach dem Unendlichen."³ Some-what later he finds it impossible to love women because they lack this impulse toward the infinite;⁴ and hence Caroline is such a revelation to him. Novalis writes of his satisfaction in Schelling: "Echte Universal-tendenz in ihm — wahre Strahlenkraft — von *einem* Punkt in die Unendlichkeit hinaus."⁵

The early Romanticists related their religion and their love to the infinite. Schleiermacher tells his hearers: "Wahre Religion ist Empfin-dung und Geschmack für das Unendliche"; in mystical language he celebrates, in the second of his addresses on religion, the surrender, in reli-gious feeling, of the individual life to the embrace of the infinite, and the immortality which we gain by becoming "mitten in der Endlichkeit eins mit dem Unendlichen."⁶

For the young Friedrich Schlegel, love has an allegorical significance; it is a symbol for infinite love, which hovers in the background. The lover of Lucinde never loses his metaphysical sense; he loves, one might say, *sub specie universi*. This spirit of love and infinity Schlegel regarded as the essence of poetry: "Der Geist der Liebe

muss in der romantischen Poesie überall unsichtbar sichtbar schweben. . . . Er ist ein unendliches Wesen und mit nichts haftet und klebt sein Interesse nur an den Personen, den Begebenheiten und Situationen und den individuellen Neigungen: für den wahren Dichter ist alles dieses, so innig es auch seine Seele umschliessen mag, nur Hindeutung auf das Höhere, Unendliche, Hieroglyphe der Einen ewigen Liebe.”⁷

“Höhere Poesie” meant for Novalis “Poesie des Unendlichen,”⁸ and his finest poetic work, the *Hymnen an die Nacht*, illustrate this view. Here the finite world merges into the infinite, the personal into the universal. Everything limited and singular, all that the harsh light of day severed, is united and engulfed in merciful night, the illimitable ocean from which all things went forth and into which they must return. Night, sleep, and death are mysteriously identified, and everywhere the boundaries between this world and the other are obliterated.

This cult of infinity became for Novalis religion. It made him turn away from his old favorite, *Wilhelm Meister*, at first with dissatisfaction and then with positive repugnance. Goethe’s novel seemed to him “eine poetisierte bürgerliche und häusliche Geschichte . . . ein fatales und albernes Buch . . . eine Satire auf die Poesie . . . künstlerischer Atheismus”; he admired its style, but considered its spirit not only unpoetic

but anti-poetic.⁹ He planned his own *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as a poetic “contrefact” to it; and its seemingly nebulous and miraculous aspect is doubtless due to this intended opposition to Goethe’s realism. What repelled Novalis in *Meister* was the author’s “Diesseitigkeit,” his limitation to this world and exclusion of the metaphysical. Goethe seemed to him to have abandoned his earlier ideals of fullness of life and completeness of personality by ignoring the infinite, the tragic, and the nocturnal, and by bringing his hero at last to renunciation and to prosaic contentment with this world. To Novalis, as to Kleist, the unhappy, the incalculable and pathological were an integral part of poetic truth, which they were unwilling to exclude. They opposed Goethe, not for what he gave, but for what he withheld. They, too, wanted finite form, but they wanted it to suggest the infinite and be related to it; they wanted everything to hang, as it were, by a metaphysical cord. Humanism was the ideal of the early Romanticists, too; but the humanism of Weimar came to seem to them negative and incomplete, while they themselves saw humanity not only in its finite but in its infinite implications.

Goethe showed, like the Romanticists, an active interest in the advancement of contemporary science. But even here the characteristic difference may be discerned between the “Dies-

seitigkeit" of Goethe and the "Jenseitigkeit" of Kleist and the early Romanticists. Goethe studied the phenomena of geology, physiology, and light; he worked in daylight, with the physical eye; to Schiller he wrote: "Es wird, wenn Sie wollen, eigentlich *die Welt des Auges*, die durch Gestalt und Farbe erschöpft wird. Denn wenn ich recht Acht gebe, so brauche ich die Hülfsmittel anderer Sinne nur sparsam, und alles Raisonnement verwandelt sich in eine Art von Darstellung."¹⁰ Kleist and the Romanticists, on the other hand, turned with a metaphysical avidity to the occult realm of psychology, somnambulism, and magnetism, to that which the physical eye could not see, to what they were fond of calling "the nocturnal side of natural science." Goethe sought in science a means of understanding this world; Novalis sought in it "Aussichten auf die unsichtbare Welt" and an entrance to eternity.¹¹

The great determinative experience in Kleist's life is his discovery, through the study of Kantian philosophy, of the irrational, tragic aspect of existence, his becoming aware of universal night and infinity. Henceforth he exhibits the peculiar combination of qualities which, as we have seen, characterizes the early Romanticists; and this can be observed in his narrative and dramatic works from first to last. His eyes were opened,

like Novalis', to metaphysical vision, and we seem to feel the cosmic breath as well as the Christian otherworldliness of the *Hymnen an die Nacht* in those words to Altenstein, which he repeats almost unchanged to Rühle four weeks later: "Ach, was ist dies für eine Welt? Wie kann ein edles Wesen, ein denkendes und empfindendes, wie der Mensch, hier glücklich sein! Wie kann er es nur *wollen*, hier, wo alles mit dem Tode endigt! . . . Nur darum ist dieses Gewimmel von Erscheinungen angeordnet, damit der Mensch an *keiner* hafte. . . . Denken Sie nur, diese unendliche Fortdauer! Millionen von Zeiträumen, jedweder ein Leben, und für jedweden eine Erscheinung, wie diese Welt! Wie doch der kleine Stern heißen mag, den man auf dem Sirius, wenn der Himmel klar ist, sieht? Und dieses ganze ungeheure Firmament, das die Phantasie nicht ermessen kann, nur ein Stäubchen gegen den unendlichen Raum! O mein edler Freund, ist dies ein Traum? Zwischen je zwei Lindenblättern . . . eine Aussicht, an Ahndungen reicher, als Gedanken fassen, und Worte sagen können!"¹²

The love of infinity led Kleist and the Romantics to the love of night. "Nur in der Ruhe der Nacht," says Lucinde, "glüht und glänzt die Sehnsucht und die Liebe"; "und am Tage," replies Julius, "schimmert das Glück der Liebe blass, so wie der Mond nur sparsam leuchtet."¹³

When Friedrich Schlegel speaks of the "hard light of day"¹⁴ we recall the lines of Novalis' hymns:

Wie arm und kindisch
Dünkt mir das Licht nun,
Mit seinen bunten Dingen,
Wie erfreulich und gesegnet
Des Tages Abschied . . .
Himmlicher als jene blitzenden Sterne
In jenen Weiten
Dünken uns die unendlichen Augen,
Die die Nacht
In uns geöffnet.
Weiter sehn sie
Als die blässtesten
Jener zahllosen Heere.¹⁵

Kleist's favorite symbol for infinity is endless night, the distant stars, the milky way; he feels the longing of Novalis for stellar space.¹⁶ He discovers, like Novalis, the limitation of daylight, which shows us only the earth and its encircling atmosphere, whereas the eyes of the night look into the depths of the universe: "Der helle Sonnenschein des Glücks, der uns verblendet, ist auch nicht einmal für unser schwaches Auge gemacht. Am Tage sehn wir wohl die schöne Erde, doch wenn es Nacht ist, sehn wir in die Sterne."¹⁷ The supra-mundane detachment with which Kleist, like a disembodied spirit, looked back upon the earth during his last days is strikingly like Novalis'.¹⁸ It seems as though Kleist finally could no longer resist the powerful attrac-

tion of infinite night, and he realized only too well the words of Novalis: "Wer oben stand auf diesem Grenzgebirge der Welt, und hinüber sah in das neue Land, in der Nacht Wohnsitz — wahrlich der kehrt nicht in das Treiben der Welt zurück, in das Land, wo das Licht regiert und ewige Unruh haust."¹⁹

XI

Romantic Irony

ONE of the sources of that complex phenomenon known as "Romantic irony" is Fichte's doctrine of "intellektuelle Anschauung." Fichte formulated in philosophical terms the attitude of superior self-contemplation which appealed so strongly to the rational side of the early Romantic character. These men, as we have seen, no longer believed in unconscious "natural genius"; they demanded that artistic self-consciousness and reason not merely should accompany but should control poetic inspiration. They held that the poet should not lose himself in his work, but should always retain a position above it and above himself. In other words, Romantic irony, which in the hands of Tieck and his followers became a vehicle of obtrusive subjectivity, was, in its original meaning and intent, altogether objective; and it might be explained, like so much else in early Romanticism, as a continuation and development of the artistic attitude of Goethe and Schiller.

The intimate relation of "irony" to Schiller's notion of "Spieltrieb" has already been pointed out, and both, in fact, are closely connected with Fichte's philosophy.¹ Schiller and Goethe were of the opinion that a work of art should not pro-

duce a complete illusion, that we should remain conscious of "Schein" or "Spiel" and not identify art with reality. Quite similar is Friedrich Schlegel's standpoint: "Selbst in ganz populären Arten wie z.B. im Schauspiel fordern wir Ironie; wir fordern, dass die Begebenheiten, die Menschen, kurz das ganze Spiel des Lebens wirklich auch als Spiel genommen und dargestellt sei."² Schlegel aspired to a "Transzentalpoesie" which portrayed itself and its producer, and he found examples of it not only in the Greeks but in Goethe; Goethe's poetry seemed to him "die vollständigste Poesie der Poesie," and *Wilhelm Meister* a masterpiece of supreme irony.³ The author of *Meister* indeed stood far off from his work and treated it with a superior playfulness which delighted him as well as Schiller. And Schiller, while engaged on *Wallenstein*, writes to Goethe on November 28, 1796, reporting with satisfaction his cool detachment from his characters, his soaring above his work and dominating it.⁴ Thus not only Goethe, whom the Romanticists emulated, but Schiller, whom they ignored, cultivated an objectivity essentially identical with Romantic irony.

Another and a more important source of this doctrine, however, is the metaphysicism of the early Romanticists, their ever-active sense of the infinite. Friedrich Schlegel finds the "divine breath of irony" in ancient as well as modern

poets, and defines it as "die Stimmung, welche alles übersieht und sich über alles Bedingte unendlich erhebt, auch über eigne Kunst, Tugend oder Genialität."⁵ The ironical mood is the result of recognition of the disparity between the finite and the infinite, the limited and the absolute. Of Socratic irony, Schlegel says: "Sie enthält und erregt ein Gefühl von dem unauflöslichen Widerstreit des Unbedingten und des Bedingten, der Unmöglichkeit und Notwendigkeit einer vollständigen Mitteilung."⁶

Schlegel found the ultimate source of irony to be in philosophy.⁷ He might also have pointed out its affinity to otherworldly Christianity, which Novalis was more apt to discern. "Selbstbewusstsein der Unendlichkeit" appears to the author of the *Dialogen* the goal of temporal life, and our purpose in it is to reach happiness and eternity by spiritual detachment and transcendence, by regarding our existence as a beautiful illusion, a passing play; once we have gained this absolute point of view, the sad hours of our earthly pilgrimage will seem light and its brevity charming rather than deplorable.⁸ With such religious "irony" Novalis learned to regard his own existence. It is the mood which inspires Prince Frederick before his expected death, and Kleist himself at the end of his life.

The ironical attitude may be called not only philosophical or religious, but also, in the finest

sense, humorous. For true humor also is based on a transcendental scale of values; it looks upon the relative and transitory from the eminence of the absolute and eternal. The keen mind of Novalis, in fact, perceived this relationship: "Humor ist Resultat einer freien Vermischung des Bedingten und Unbedingten.... Schlegels Ironie scheint mir echter Humor zu sein."⁹ "Wir müssen uns," writes Friedrich Schlegel, "über unsere eigene Liebe erheben, und, was wir anbeten, in Gedanken vernichten können: sonst fehlt uns . . . der Sinn für das Weltall."¹⁰ Romantic irony means to remind us, in all finite phenomena, of the infinite.

Irony is definable also as superior self-criticism, ridicule of the inadequacy of one's own production. The Romanticists were, like Kleist, unhappily conscious of the inequality between their ideal and their accomplishment. "Die Wahrheit ist," Kleist confesses, "dass ich das, was ich mir vorstelle, schön finde, nicht das, was ich leiste."¹¹ This state of mind may lead to the sovereign destruction of the poet's own work and being: when Kleist condemned and burned his *Robert Guiskard*, and when he ended his own life, he illustrated in merciless earnest and consistency the same feeling that led the lesser Romanticists to playful destruction of illusion.

In so far as it results from the writer's recognition of his own inability to attain his ideal,

"irony" is negative, renunciatory, and defensive; it is a sort of inner compensation for a consciousness of inferiority. The author recovers a certain degree of spiritual independence by showing that he knows how far his performance falls short of his intent. One should expect, then, to find this variety of irony especially in those writers whose artistic intelligence far exceeds their formative power. And that is actually the case: all the traditional examples of "Romantic irony" are taken from the writings of Tieck and Brentano, or from Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde*; none can be drawn from the works of Novalis or Kleist.

It is possible to see a trace of irony in the occasional expression, by the narrator Kleist, of an opinion about his own characters, or in his device of anticipating in his own person the later development of a story and then returning to its beginning.¹² Kleist believed, like the Romantics, that the most interesting aspect of a work of art is the personality behind it. And there are not lacking in his letters pathetic avowals of the insufficiency of his powers to his gigantic task. But Kleist's artistic tact was as much finer than that of Friedrich Schlegel, Brentano, or Tieck, as his poetic genius was greater than theirs. The instinct of the born dramatist prevented him from injecting himself into his work; only in his private letters, and even there in poetically elevated language, does he pour out his grief and despair over

his half-talents. The heroic pathos of his letter to Ulrike from St. Omer¹³ shows how, even in moments of intense agony, he never lost a certain artistic detachment from himself.

The irony of literary history may again be seen in the fact that our current notions of "irony" are derived, not from the pure theory of the early Romanticists, but from its distorted, not to say burlesque, application by later Romantic writers. There is not only a quantitative but a qualitative difference between the profound conception of irony by Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis and its superficial use and abuse by Brentano and Heine; originally a religious attitude, it degenerates into a mannerism and a self-caricature.

XII

Individualism

THE individualism which marks so distinctly the works of Kleist and the early Romanticists is by no means a sudden innovation on their part, but the organic development of certain tendencies of the preceding age. Eighteenth-century Rationalism since Leibniz had had a decidedly individualistic, even atomistic, character.¹ It began with the declaration “cogito, ergo sum,” and made the individual’s “gesunden Menschen-verstand” the criterion of all things. Its slogan, according to Kant, was: “Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen!”² It insisted on the self-perfection of the individual, an ideal to which Friedrich Schlegel and Heinrich von Kleist in their youth devoted themselves with religious zeal. It answered every ethical question in terms of the greatest good of the individual; hence its conception of the state was that of a large protective organization safeguarding individual life and enterprise. Rationalism was a part of the great individualistic movement of which early Romanticism marked the climax.

This individualistic trend of the century may also be seen in Sentimentalism, which rehabili-

tated the emotional side of human nature as a supplement and corrective to one-sided Rationalism. The Romanticists came to oppose the false emotionality of Sentimentalism quite as vigorously as the degenerate phases of Rationalism, but they reaped the best fruits of these two movements. Schleiermacher and Novalis were deeply rooted in the Pietism of the previous century, which preserved one of the finest spiritual gains of the Lutheran Reformation in its insistence on the individual nature of religious experience. When Schleiermacher, in his *Reden über die Religion*, preached the gospel of personal, immediate, and emotional religion, he was only reasserting the Pietistic ideal, and continuing, in its religious phase, an individualistic movement of long duration.

The early Romanticists revered in everything individual a symbol and embodiment of the infinite. Thus does Schleiermacher define religion: "Alles Einzelne als einen Teil des Ganzen, alles Beschränkte als eine Darstellung des Unendlichen in unser Leben aufnehmen, und uns davon bewegen lassen, das ist Religion."³ These men never lost their "eye for the whole," their awareness of the infinite implications of all finite phenomena; hence their high regard for even the smallest individual life, their sympathetic understanding for the art and poetry of other times and races, and above all, their respect for human

personality, which they share with Kleist and Hebbel. They cherished, as we have noted, no less than Goethe and Schiller, the abstract ideal of perfect humanity, but they went to greater lengths than the poets of Weimar were willing to go in appreciative interest in the most peculiarly individual, the unique, and the abnormal. Here, too, they were not, and did not feel themselves to be, the opponents of Classicism, but only the continuators and supplementers of it. Friedrich Schlegel considered a certain lawful interrelationship between individuality and universality to constitute the essence of the higher life and the first condition of moral health; "Je vollständiger man ein Individuum lieben oder bilden kann, je mehr Harmonie findet man in der Welt: Je mehr man von der Organisation des Universums versteht, je reicher, unendlicher und weltähnlicher wird uns jeder Gegenstand."⁴

The early Romanticists agreed with Goethe in expecting education, at its best, to bring about the organic development or unfolding of the innate personality. Novalis asks, "Wie kann ein Mensch Sinn für etwas haben, wenn er nicht den Keim davon in sich hat? Was ich verstehn soll, muss sich in mir organisch entwickeln; und was ich zu lernen scheine, ist nur Nahrung, Inzitament des Organismus."⁵ Already the youthful author of the *Rede zum Shakespeares-Tag* had said, "von Verdiensten, die wir zu schätzen wis-

sen, haben wir den Keim in uns.”⁶ “Sich ausschliesslich der Entwicklung eines ursprünglichen Triebes zu widmen ist so würdig und so weise, wie das Beste und das Höchste, was der Mensch nur immer zum Geschäft seines Lebens wählen kann,” says Friedrich Schlegel, “gerade die Individualität ist das Ursprüngliche und Ewige im Menschen. . . . Die Bildung und Entwicklung dieser Individualität als höchsten Beruf zu treiben, wäre ein göttlicher Egoismus.”⁷ He deemed man’s individuality his most human and most sacred attribute,⁸ and he considered all forcible moral education of the individual to be foolish and unallowable, its only result being “dass man den Menschen verkünstelt und sich an seinem Heiligsten vergreift, an seiner Individualität.”⁹ These words suggest Goethe no less than Hebbel,¹⁰ and they can be paralleled in utterances of Kleist’s: the editor of the *Berliner Abendblätter* demands respect for individuality even in the child: “Das Kind ist kein Wachs, das sich, in eines Menschen Händen, zu einer beliebigen Gestalt kneten lässt: es lebt, es ist frei; es trägt ein unabhängiges und eigenständliches Vermögen der Entwicklung und das Muster aller innerlichen Gestaltung, in sich.”¹¹

Hanna Hellmann detected, two decades ago, Kleist’s extraordinary bias toward the individual: “Es handelt sich bei Kleist nie um ein Allgemeines, so etwa . . . um ein Sittengesetz . . . es

handelt sich im Sinne der Romantik um das ganz Individuelle, um das Einzelschicksal, das aus dem Wesen stammt, um jenes Gesetz, nach dem, wie Schleiermacher es ausdrückt, alles Glück und alles Schicksal an diese bestimmte Form der Beschränkung, an diese Individualität gebunden ist.”¹² The consciousness of a compelling individual law, “das innerste Gefühl,” can be traced all through Kleist’s writings, private and poetic. His ethics, like those of the Romanticists, are based on an individualistic philosophy of life; morality for him, as for Novalis, is the result of obedience; not to external and general precepts, but to the moral instinct which speaks in the soul of each individual.¹³

With few exceptions, Kleist’s works deal with single, preëminent, heroic personages and the problems of their personality. This humanistic, individualistic preoccupation connects Kleist with Goethe and Schiller. But more and more he, like the Romanticists, turned to the question of the relations of the individual to society; this was one of the central questions of Kleist’s age, an age of transition which was tragic in Hebbel’s sense. But even the Elector in Kleist’s last play, the representative of that law and discipline against which the Prince has rebelled, is not without a deep regard for the rights and feelings of the individual. He says to Natalie quite sincerely:

Die höchste Achtung, wie dir wohl bekannt,
Trag' ich im Innersten für sein Gefühl. (1183-1184)

His trust in the Prince is based on his “Gefühl von ihm” quite as much as is the Prince’s trust in him. On the strength of his intuitive perception of the young man’s mettle he undertakes, after a moment’s characteristic “confusion of feeling,” the immense risk of placing the decision entirely in the Prince’s hands. No man not endowed with a strong individualism would be capable of such an act; the Elector is not a martinet of law and order, but a self-disciplined individual.

In the celebrated *Gespräch über die Poesie*, Friedrich Schlegel encourages everyone to go in his own peculiar way to the goal of the new art, for nowhere are the rights of individuality and originality more valid than in this highest sphere; “der eigentliche Wert, ja die Tugend des Menschen ist seine Originalität.”¹⁴ Originality of invention was, even more than talent in execution, the highest criterion of genius in the estimation of Kleist as well as of the early Romanticists. He describes a painting, “schlecht gezeichnet zwar, doch von der schönsten Erfindung, die man sich denken kann; und Erfindung ist es überall, was ein Werk der Kunst ausmacht. Denn nicht das, was dem Sinn dargestellt ist, sondern das, was das Gemüt durch diese Wahrnehmung erregt, ist das Kunstwerk.”¹⁵ He inveighs against the

merely technical discipline of a young artist, and reminds him that originality, invention, "dieses Spiel der Seligen," is an even more essential constituent of art, "denn die Aufgabe, Himmel und Erde! ist ja nicht, ein anderer, sondern ihr selbst zu sein, und euch selbst, euer Eigenstes und Innerstes, durch Umriss und Farben zur Anschauung zu bringen."¹⁶ Reinhold Steig has noted that at this point the Romantic principles of art are closely in harmony with those of Goethe.¹⁷

In one of his last letters, Kleist looks forward to undertaking something "quite fantastic," giving free rein to his originality, following only the dictates of his heart, and having regard for nothing else than his own inward satisfaction. He singles out *Käthchen von Heilbronn* as showing especially how his original inventions have suffered from too much consideration for public opinion; this play, altogether excellent as first conceived, has been spoiled by subsequent alterations. Henceforth he intends to become imbued with the conviction that a work of art originating in complete freedom in the poet's soul must necessarily possess a general human value.¹⁸ This is a distinctly Romantic confession of faith. *Käthchen* is a "Märchendrama," a dramatized fairy-tale, and it seems to have had, in its initial form, even more affinity with *Undine* or *Melusine*.¹⁹ It was one of the three plays which acquainted E. T. A. Hoffmann with "the essence of Romanticism."²⁰ It is

significant, therefore, that at the end of his life Kleist assigned a certain typical value to the play which he himself styled the most Romantic of his productions,²¹ and that he planned works of a similar individual and fanciful character.

It was as the field of freest fancy that the Romantics prized the "Märchen" so highly. It was an even greater favorite with them than the novel; "das Märchen ist gleichsam der Kanon der Poesie," said Novalis, "alles Poetische muss märchenhaft sein."²² Here was an ideal world in which the poet could roam, untrammelled by the limitations of reality; where the injustices of human life could be corrected by beneficent miracles, and the fairest dreams come true. But here also was a playground for those capricious talents who felt as irksome the restraint of literary form and dramatic cogency; here poets like Tieck, whose imagination outran their formative powers, found a congenial medium. And, in fact, *Käthchen* is of all Kleist's plays the loosest in dramatic structure: it falls apart into one group of scenes centering about Käthchen and another centering about Kunigunde; these two groups are joined only by the mediation of Count Wetter and are brought together forcibly in the third act by the improbable expedient of interchanged letters. But even so, this play of Kleist's is superior to such amorphous creations as *Kaiser Oktavianus*; even in an essentially undramatic genre, Kleist

cannot conceal the dramatic power which makes him preëminent among his Romantic contemporaries.

The high valuation which these contemporaries, also, placed on originality of invention, led to that dubious later Romantic doctrine according to which the poet was esteemed for his conception rather than his production. The "potential" artist was admired, the poet who could not write, the painter who never executed a canvas. Kleist himself, to be sure, and the real poets of Romanticism, did not join in this cult and did not take comfort in the recognition of their own inability. But it is interesting to observe that, just as it was said of the Romanticists, especially the early ones, that their characters were poetic and that they lived their poetry, so Heinrich von Kleist's beloved cousin writes of him after his death: "Und wenn er kein einziges Gedicht erzeugt hätte, so war er doch seiner Natur nach ein Dichter. Er war der poetischste, der romantischste Mensch, den ich je gesehen."²³

Because of their great concern for individuality, as well as their propensity to look behind the appearances of things, the early Romanticists and Kleist attach much importance to the manifestation of the poet in his work. This wish for the emergence of the author's personality is probably one of the causes of Romantic irony. Schiller seems to regard it as peculiar to the "sentimental" writers of the time that they "do not know how to let themselves be seen in their works."²⁴

mental" character,²⁴ but there is no doubt that Goethe's example greatly influenced Friedrich Schlegel's conception of a "Transzendentalthpoesie" in which the poet's individuality should be at all times implicitly present, hovering as a sort of "over-soul" over his work.²⁵ Schlegel says of Goethe's poems: "Vieles von dem Zauber und Reiz dieser Gedichte liegt in der schönen Individualität, die sich darin äussert und zur Mitteilung gleichsam gehen lässt."²⁶ Schleiermacher observes: "Alle Erscheinungen sind nur . . . da, um die Betrachtung zu lenken auf den Geist, der sie spielend hervorbrachte."²⁷ In the same sense Kleist wrote to Fouqué: "Die Erscheinung, die am meisten, bei der Betrachtung eines Kunstwerks, röhrt, ist, dünkt mich, nicht das Werk selbst, sondern die Eigentümlichkeit des Geistes, der es hervorbrachte, und der sich, in unbewusster Freiheit und Lieblichkeit, darin entfaltet."²⁸

XIII

Words and Music

THE inadequacy of language as a vehicle of human communication and poetic utterance was axiomatic for Kleist and the Romanticists. The author of *Hyperion* speaks more than once of the failure of words to convey the infinity of thoughts and emotions: "Ich sag's aus tiefer Seele Dir: die Sprache ist ein grosser Überfluss. Das Beste bleibt doch immer für sich und ruht in seiner Tiefe, wie die Perle im Grunde des Meers."¹ In a letter to a friend, Hölderlin calls the symbols of writing "trübe Gefäße für goldnen Wein"; and he laments: "Es ist auch immer ein Tod für unsre stille Seligkeit, wenn sie zur Sprache werden muss."² Novalis says: "Unsere Sprache ist entweder mechanisch, atomistisch, oder dynamisch. Die echt poetische Sprache soll aber organisch, lebendig sein. Wie oft fühlt man die Armut an Worten."³ Schleiermacher finds language to be an estranging rather than a connecting medium, a dungeon in which the soul is held in solitary confinement.⁴ "Wie soll ich es möglich machen," writes Kleist, "in einem Briefe etwas so Zartes, als ein Gedanke ist, auszuprägen? Ja, wenn man Tränen schreiben könnte!"⁵ "Selbst

das einzige [Mittel zur Mitteilung], das wir besitzen, die Sprache, taugt nicht dazu, sie kann die Seele nicht malen und was sie uns gibt sind nur zerrissene Bruchstücke.”⁶ “Die Worte sind matt und trübe,” complains the author of *Lucinde*; “O mein Freund, wenn ich nur noch ein feineres, gebildeteres Element der Mitteilung wüsste. Diese einzelnen Worte geben immer wieder nur eine Seite, ein Stück . . . von dem Ganzen, das ich in seiner vollen Harmonie andeuten möchte.”⁷ He envies an art like Raphael’s, in which words, at best inadequate, are not required: “Das wirkt so unmittelbar, und geht gleich vom Auge in die Seele, man kommt nicht auf Worte dabei, man hat keine nötig.”⁸

Kleist and the Romanticists sought for a more and more immaterial element of communication. First of all they tried to give to language itself a transparency which should make it invisible rather than alluring. Kleist’s objection to language, like that of Novalis, was founded on its inaptness to convey meaning definitely and completely; Tieck’s objection, and that of the later Romanticists, was that words rendered vague and misty emotions too clear and definite. Kleist considered language, rhythm, and euphony as necessary evils, and deemed it the office of art to make these trappings of thought disappear as much as possible: “Ich bemühe mich aus meinen besten Kräften, dem Ausdruck Klarheit, dem Versbau Bedeutung, dem

Klang der Worte Anmut und Leben zu geben; aber bloss, damit diese Dinge garnicht, vielmehr einzig und allein der Gedanke, den sie einschliesen, erscheine. Denn das ist die Eigenschaft aller echten Form, dass der Geist augenblicklich und unmittelbar daraus hervortritt, während die mangelhafte ihn, wie ein schlechter Spiegel, gebunden hält, und uns an nichts erinnert, als an sich selbst.”⁹

Schiller indeed made the vanishing of form a criterion of literary genius: “Eine solche Art des Ausdrucks, wo das Zeichen ganz in dem Bezeichneten verschwindet, und wo die Sprache den Gedanken, den sie ausdrückt, noch gleichsam nackend lässt . . . ist es, was man in der Schreibart vorzugsweise genialisch und geistreich nennt.”¹⁰ The Protean Tieck, when as a young man he contributed to Wackenroder’s *Herzensergiessungen*, held a similar opinion: in the paintings of Dürer, he writes, we still feel the material, we are conscious of beholding a work of artifice and skill; with a penetrating glance we can almost dispel the painted figures and discover the bare board beneath; but Raphael’s art is so wonderful that we forget that there are such things as colors and technique.¹¹

Later Romanticism, however, cultivated literary form, not as a means to communicate content, but as an end in itself; it represents the self-conscious and over-bred phase of the Romantic movement.

Unlike the editor, Steig, I should interpret Kleist's *Brief eines Dichters an einen anderen* as dealing with this late-Romantic virtuosity of form, and I believe that Kleist is distinguishing sharply between the original doctrine of Romanticism, paradoxically proclaimed in the aphorisms of Friedrich Schlegel, and the subsequent misinterpretation and distortion of this doctrine, when he says: "Diese Unempfindlichkeit gegen das Wesen und den Kern der Poesie, bei der bis zur Krankheit ausgebildeten Reizbarkeit für das Zufällige und die Form, klebt Deinem Gemüt überhaupt, meine ich, von der Schule an, aus welcher Du stammst; ohne Zweifel gegen die Absicht dieser Schule, welche selbst geistreicher war, als irgend eine, die je unter uns auftrat, obschon nicht ganz, bei dem paradoxen Mutwillen ihrer Lehrart, ohne ihre Schuld."¹²

The German Romanticists had, from first to last, a sympathetic relation to music. They revered it as the highest and least corporeal of all the arts, the most refined of all media of intercourse; through the "holy magic of this romantic art"¹³ they gained access to the ultimate depths of the universe. In Wackenroder's *Morgenländisches Märchen von einem nackten Heiligen*, music figures as the divine power that releases a fettered soul into the starry spaces of infinity.¹⁴ This musical proclivity connects early with late Romanticism, and Kleist with Hoffmann, and on the other side it connects Romanticism with Herder and Heinse

and the "Sturm und Drang." Wackenroder was passionately fond of music, and wished to devote his life to it; his conception of music as a language more immediate and more essential than words or thoughts became decisive for early Romanticism and was shared by Heinrich von Kleist. Tieck, in continuing the work of his friend, expresses the latter's favorite idea thus: "Die Musik ist der letzte Geisterhauch, das feinste Element, aus dem die verborgensten Seelenträume wie aus einem unsichtbaren Bache ihre Nahrung ziehen . . . sie ist ein Organ, feiner als die Sprache, vielleicht zarter als seine [*i.e.*, des Menschen] Gedanken"; "es geschieht hier, dass man Gedanken ohne jenen mühsamen Umweg der Worte denkt, hier ist Gefühl, Phantasie und Kraft des Denkens eins . . . die Seele ist im Kunstwerke einheimisch, das Kunstwerk lebt und regiert sich in unserm Innern, wir sind mit allem einverstanden, eine gleiche Melodie spielt unser Geist mit des Künstlers Seele, und es dünkt uns auf keine Weise nötig, zu beweisen und weitläufige Reden darüber zu führen."¹⁵ Kleist believed music to be the root or fundamental formula of all the arts;¹⁶ Wackenroder sought in it the ancient and original speech of man, which he must learn again if he is to regain paradise and be absorbed by the infinite.¹⁷

Wackenroder, like Kleist, was attracted to music by a deep-seated conviction of the inadequacy of spoken words and by the search for a more esoteric

speech. For Kleist, language is a fetter and impediment of the spirit;¹⁸ for Wackenroder, it is a painful earthly effort, and the sepulchre of our heart's passion, which we must burst in resurrection.¹⁹ To attempt to express in words the endless variety of individual experiences is to measure the richer language by the poorer and resolve into words that which despises words. Wackenroder uses the figure of a flowing stream whose manifold motions and changes cannot be reproduced, but only scantily enumerated, by words; so it is with the mysterious stream that rises from the depths of the human soul: "Die Sprache zählt und nennt und beschreibt seine Verwandlungen, in fremdem Stoff; — die Tonkunst strömt ihn uns selber vor." Through definite, miraculous symbols in definite sequence, music speaks directly to our souls.²⁰ Hyperion's sweetheart, Diotima, expresses herself best in song, and is chary of words; Hyperion says, in relating their first meeting: "Wir sprachen sehr wenig zusammen. Man schämt sich seiner Sprache. Zum Tone möchte man werden und sich vereinen in Einem Himmelsgesang."²¹

The early Romanticists and Kleist valued music for both its rational and irrational properties, both as a formal art and as a means of intuitive and emotional perception of the universe. Kleist, as he listened with parched soul to the music of the Catholic church in Dresden, or as he described its wonders in *Die heilige Cäcilie*, no doubt longed,

like Wackenroder's friar, to plunge "in das Land der Musik, als in das *Land des Glaubens*, wo alle unsre Zweifel und unsre Leiden sich in ein tönendes Meer verlieren."²² But he was impressed also by the structure of music, and by its rational composition; it was in counterpoint that he hoped to find important revelations concerning the laws of poetry.²³ Novalis in like manner held that poetry could benefit, in technique and economy, by the example of music: "Überhaupt können die Dichter nicht genug von den Musikern und Malern lernen. In diesen Künsten wird es recht auffallend, wie nötig es ist, wirtschaftlich mit den Hülfsmitteln der Kunst umzugehen, und wieviel auf geschickte Verhältnisse ankommt."²⁴

The Romanticists found instances of the association of musical and poetic art not only in ancient literature, but also in Goethe's works.²⁵ The author of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* admitted the essential identity of music and poetry, and planned his first chapter as an *adagio*;²⁶ one can, in fact, ascribe a musical character to various passages of his novel, for example, the opening of the second part,²⁷ which bears a certain resemblance to the third act of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Novalis, like Kleist, thought musical and poetical technique closely akin, and he seems to have envisaged a composite form of art not unlike that which Wagner later realized. In his ever-suggestive *Fragments* he notes, "Rede — Gesang — Rezitativ, oder besser,

Rezitativ (Epos), Gesang (Lyra), echte Deklamation (Drama). Vollkommene Oper ist eine freie Vereinigung aller, die höchste Stufe des Dramas;²⁸ "Kompositionen der Rede. Musikalische Behandlung der Schriftstellerei"; "Man muss schriftstellern, wie komponieren."²⁹

The conception of music which Kleist and Novalis strove to embody in their works is far deeper than that of Tieck, which is ordinarily thought of as typical of Romanticism. Tieck effected, by the use of assonances, rhymes, and the like, an external melodiousness of verse which is as different from the inner music of Kleist's poetic style as a pretty, sentimental song is from a symphony. Tieck employed music as a superficial adornment; Kleist strove to create with the aid of its inmost laws.

The musical spirit and structure of Kleist's dramas have been pointed out more than once. A quarter of a century ago Franz Servaes, in a fine characterization of *Penthesilea*, saw in the symphonic movement and orchestration of this play a close similarity to the works of Beethoven.³⁰ More recently, Julius Petersen has interpreted *Penthesilea* as a sonata; in Kleist's musical repetition of pictures and motives he sees an anticipation of Richard Wagner's technique, and he believes that "eine gewisse Entdeckung im Gebiete der Kunst," of which Kleist speaks with such mysterious solemnity,³¹ can refer to nothing less than the ideal to which Wagner aspired.³² In *Robert Guiskard*

and *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, Frida Teller³³ has discovered a musical procedure very similar to Wagner's, especially in the reminiscent repetition of motives.

One may indeed distinguish in Kleist's last play, as well as in *Guiskard* and *Penthesilea*, a genuinely musical tone and rhythm. The opening scene gives the theme of the whole, and in it the voices which dominate the later course of the composition are heard, each with his characteristic note: the Prince, the Elector, Natalie, Kottwitz, Hohenzollern. Then the original theme is developed, emphasized, repeated, contradicted, broken up by dissonances; the collapse of the Prince bursts in upon our ears like crashing brass; but through the sombre notes of death we hear the clarion call of Natalie which marks the beginning of the Prince's regeneration. At last, rising above the storm of contending forces, resounds the motif of the hero's conquest of life and death; with unearthly clearness, like the notes of a solitary violin falling as it were from distant stars, we hear the words:

Nun, o Unsterblichkeit, bist du ganz mein!
Du strahlst mir, durch die Binde meiner Augen,
Mit Glanz der tausendfachen Sonne zu!
Es wachsen Flügel mir an beiden Schultern,
Durch stille Ätherräume schwingt mein Geist;
Und wie ein Schiff, vom Hauch des Winds entführt,
Die muntere Hafenstadt versinken sieht,
So geht mir dämmernd alles Leben unter:
Jetzt unterscheid' ich Farben noch und Formen,
Und jetzt liegt Nebel alles unter mir.

Then, at the very end, the first scene is repeated; the initial theme is heard again, but enriched and refined by the intervening development; it is the same, and yet different. Goethe, who is often looked upon as unmusical, and whose admission to this effect³⁴ has been taken all too literally, employs a similar device at the end of *Faust*, when Gretchen's jubilant song:

Neige, neige,
Du Ohnngleiche,
Du Strahlenreiche,
Dein Antlitz gnädig meinem Glück!

reminds us, like the last faint echo of a tragic “Leitmotiv” of her earlier song:

Ach neige,
Du Schmerzenreiche,
Dein Antlitz gnädig meiner Not!

The emotional effect which Goethe and Kleist thus obtain is difficult to define rationally, but it is genuinely musical.

XIV

The Dionysian and the Supernatural

THE spirit of music is closely allied to the “Dionysian” spirit and to tragedy. Friedrich Nietzsche, in fact, conceived the tragic drama of the Greeks to have been born of music. In his opinion it was the tragic, Dionysian temper which Goethe divined in Kleist and which repelled him from the younger poet, for he himself was conciliatory and curable. Since Nietzsche’s brilliant *aperçu*, much havoc has been wrought in the study of German Classicism and Romanticism by the misuse of the terms “Apollinic” and “Dionysian” as a preconceived frame for subjective embroidery. Whatever the value of these terms as descriptions of two antithetical states of mind, they certainly do not justly differentiate the literary characters and works of Goethe and Schiller from those of Kleist and the early Romanticists. *Penthesilea* is commonly described as the opposite of *Iphigenie*; yet who would venture to assert that there is nothing “Apollinic” in the former and nothing “Dionysian” in the latter?

Kleist’s endeavor, and that of the leaders of Romanticism, was to be Apollinic and Dionysian, to produce both beauty and truth, to represent life,

ancient and modern, completely, in all its happiness and woe. In so far as they opposed the Classicism of Weimar they did so, not diametrically, one might say, but diagonally; they wished to rectify and supplement it by reaffirming the "night-side" which, they felt, Goethe and Schiller had too far denied — but without sacrificing the "day-side" which Winckelmann had taught them to see in the plastic art of the Greeks. One could find in the *Oedipus* of Sophokles or the *Bacchae* of Euripides passages as passionate and tragic in character as any in *Penthesilea*. Kleist and the Romanticists described this aspect of ancient literature long before Nietzsche defined it philosophically. They did not, however, wish to promote it exclusively, but only to reassert its validity as one element in that inclusive art which was their ideal: the young Friedrich Schlegel prized Sophokles so highly because he found perfectly blended in him "die göttliche Trunkenheit des Dionysos, die tiefe Erfindsamkeit der Athene, und die leise Besonnenheit des Apollo."¹

In the pursuit of this synthetic ideal, Kleist and the early Romanticists emphasized strongly those phases of life which they found relatively undeveloped in the works of Goethe and Schiller: they cultivated the unusual, the supernatural, and the occult. Their high esteem for the individual and the irrational, their sense of infinity, and the scientific advances of the age were calculated also to

lead them in this direction. They show a pronounced predilection for eccentric, extreme, and pathological cases. They probe into the hidden side of physical nature and human nature; they regard the inner life of the individual as more vital than the outer; external occurrences often furnish only the occasion and starting-point for the psychological processes in which they are chiefly interested. "Nach innen geht der geheimnisvolle Weg," says Novalis; "in uns oder nirgends ist die Ewigkeit mit ihren Welten, die Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Die Aussenwelt ist die Schattenwelt, sie wirft ihren Schatten in das Lichtreich."²

With keen rationality Kleist and the Romantics sought beneath the appearances of things for recondite truth; they wished to explore the uncharted seas of the human soul and draw up their unconscious life into the light of day. They became introspective to the point of morbidness. They were fascinated by the phenomena of sympathy and antipathy, magnetism and somnambulism, and dreams. Through senses more delicate than the eye they sought to reach the hidden mysteries of life. Novalis, as well as the author of *Käthchen* and *Homburg*, liked to move in those border-regions of human consciousness where dream and waking strangely merge: "Die Welt wird Traum, der Traum wird Welt." Prince Frederick, awaking in bewilderment to life instead of death, asks: "Ist es ein Traum?" and Kottwitz

replies: "Ein Traum, was sonst?" (1856). The last scene of the play reiterates and justifies the world of dreams beside the world of facts, or rather, shows these two to be one. The opening and closing scenes of *Homburg* are both a binding and a resolving element: they mark off the action finitely as by a frame, as Schiller meant to divorce the ideal from the real by means of the chorus in *Die Braut von Messina*; but they also let in upon actuality the vague and weird illumination of another world. *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* begins and ends in the realm of dreams, as Goethe's *Faust* begins and ends in heaven; in both cases a finite action is surrounded by a fringe of infinity.

Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, who initiated Kleist into Romantic science, evidently looked upon the dream-state as affording the most immediate approach to the truth of nature, and the intuitive, pictorial language of dreams as being the original speech of man, far superior to the spoken word.³ Novalis also saw less with the physical eye than with that infinite spiritual vision which night and dreams opened in him. In sleep, he finds, soul and body are perfectly fused, whereas in our waking state they are at best in polar balance: "Im Schlafe ist Körper und Seele chemisch verbunden. Im Schlafe ist die Seele durch den Körper gleichmässig verteilt. . . . Wachen ist ein geteilter, polarischer Zustand; im Wachen ist die Seele punktiert, lokalisiert."⁴ This resembles Kleist's

speculations on the localization of the soul, in *Über das Marionettentheater*.⁵ His views, as well as Novalis', are illustrated in the heroine of *Käthchen von Heilbronn*: when she is asleep, and dreaming, she has all the naïveté and unconscious grace of the marionette, and attains immediately the goal which in real life is won only after trials and tribulations. In a mysterious double dream, she and her lover are happily united, until the light of the physical world intervenes and spreads its darkness over their essential life.⁶

The supernatural is an element in Kleist's work from the very beginning, but it increases toward the end of his life under the influence of later Romanticism. The mysterious figure of Ursula in his first play is prophetic of the hags and witches that people his last tales. His use of the miraculous is of course especially striking in *Käthchen von Heilbronn*, where an angel appears bodily on the stage, and the mystical and supernatural plays a large part in the dramatic motivation; where dreams and prophecies, dark forests and charcoal-burners, thunderstorms and oracular lightning-bolts are used even more lavishly than in Schiller's "Romantic" *Jungfrau von Orleans*. The deserted forest and the meteorological paraphernalia are employed likewise for mysterious effect at the end of *Die Hermannsschlacht*; they furnish the appropriate setting for the sinister "Alraune," whose som-

bre note, like an ominous motif in a Wagnerian drama, is heard throughout the play.⁷

In rewriting and completing *Michael Kohlhaas*, Kleist was guided and misguided by new influences which came to him from contact with the Romantics of Dresden and Berlin. The first part of his story lies in clear daylight, whereas the end is overcast with the uncanny and uncertain shadow of supernaturalism. The introduction of this element is inorganic and inartistic, and Kleist's dead gipsy, walking at high noon in the streets of Jüterbog, courts comparison with the improbable revenants of Zacharias Werner.

One is reminded also of the weird identities in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* when the old gipsy turns out to be the reincarnation of Kohlhaas' dead wife. A similar motive is suggested in *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, where Toni appears so strangely like Gustav's deceased fiancée, both in character and fate.⁸ In *Der Findling* there is a preternatural resemblance, even as to names, between the diabolical Nicolo and the sainted Colino; it seems as though the author meant to insinuate that Nicolo is an evil spirit that has entered into Colino's body.⁹ Miraculous rescues play a part in *Der Findling*, as well as *Das Erdbeben von Chili* and *Der Zweikampf*; in *Kohlhaas* and in *Die heilige Cäcilie*, divine intervention saves a nunnery from destruction by a mob. The last-named story, it

is interesting to note, had a marked influence on E. T. A. Hoffmann and the visionary Justinus Kerner. Hoffmann also valued highly Kleist's *Das Bettelweib von Locarno*, which in its exaggerated and unmotivated horror anticipates some of his own works.

The Ideal Synthesis

EARLY German Romanticism shows an inclusive tendency comparable to that of the "Sturm und Drang," a Faustian desire to widen the individual consciousness until it includes all the world and the life therein. Friedrich Schlegel regarded as indispensable "die innigste, ganz rastlose, beinah gefrässige Teilnahme an allem Leben, und ein gewisses Gefühl von der Heiligkeit verschwenderischer Fülle."¹ The early Romantics strove, like Heinrich von Kleist, for unity and harmony of personality, but not at the expense of the richness and variety of life; they sought their end by a process of inclusion, not of exclusion; not by negating the antithetical, but by absorbing it into a higher entity. Their program was not reactionary, but progressive; they went forward from old antitheses to ever new syntheses.

This triadic rhythm of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis is by no means confined to the Romantics, but is more or less common to the whole age. It is found not only in Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and Müller's *Lehre vom Gegensatz*, but in the categories of Kant and occasionally in the writings of Wilhelm von Humboldt. It is the prevailing form

of reasoning not only in Kleist's essay *Über das Marionettentheater*, but in Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, where the highest ideal is seen in the synthesis of the "naïve" and the "sentimental."² As Walzel has pointed out,³ Schiller operates also in *Über Anmut und Würde* and in the *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung* with two antithetical concepts whose reconciliation produces a maximum. From Kant to Hegel, synthesis is the aim of German philosophers.

The early Romanticists carried this synthetic striving into every field of life: they wanted to reconcile philosophy and poetry, matter and spirit, instinct and intellect, nature and the human soul. This is the program of Hölderlin's projected periodical: "Vereinigung und Versöhnung der Wissenschaft mit dem Leben, der Kunst und des Geschmacks mit dem Genie, des Herzens mit dem Verstande, des Wirklichen mit dem Idealischen, des Gebildeten . . . mit der Natur — dies wird der allgemeinste Charakter, der Geist des Journals sein."⁴ Conscious, often unhappily conscious, of their conflicting heritage from the great rational and irrational movements of the previous century, they sought to unite in fruitful union the results of "Aufklärung" and "Geniezeit." Like the author of the essay on the marionettes, they conceived the discord of their souls and their times to be a state of transition which would soon give place to a new age of fulfilment. Friedrich Schlegel regarded the

history of the world as proceeding from the harmony of antiquity through the disharmony of modernity to a coming era of harmony; Novalis distinguished these three phases in the relations of body and soul, and his interpretation of the history of human culture, like Kleist's and Schiller's, shows the same characteristic stages.

In every realm of nature, according to Schelling's "Naturphilosophie," two forms of activity oppose each other and find their solution in a higher activity; everywhere polarity is resolved into unity.⁵ Schelling's theory of history and of the state, his conception of art as the all-reconciling medium and the supreme form of human accomplishment, tend in the same direction. The ideal state, according to Novalis, was to unite monarchy and republic, individualism and collectivism. The development of religion, as seen by the author of *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, was one from the monotonous unity of medieval Catholicism through the disunity of the Protestant Reformation to a future faith which should reunite all the nations of Europe. This triadic course of reasoning can be followed for page after page of Novalis' *Fragmente*.⁶

There was one synthesis, however, which Heinrich von Kleist and the early Romanticists, no less than Goethe and Schiller, believed to be vital to the progress of German poetry: the synthesis of ancient and modern poetic styles. It is well known

that Kleist devoted titanic efforts to the achievement of this ideal in *Robert Guiskard*; but, almost exactly contemporary with *Guiskard*, Schiller's *Die Braut von Messina*, A. W. Schlegel's *Ion*, and his brother's *Alarkos* were attempts at essentially the same ideal. Of these four, *Guiskard*, had it been completed in the manner of the extant fragment, would undoubtedly have been the most successful. Had Friedrich Schlegel's poetic gifts equalled his powers of perception, his play would have been a notable pendant to Kleist's; he himself described it as "ein Trauerspiel im antiken Sinn des Wortes (vorzüglich nach dem Ideale des Aeschylös) aber in romantischem Stoff und Kostüm";⁷ even in its form, which unites the classic trimeter of Aeschylus and the Spanish tetrameter of Calderón, the attempt is made, with more erudition than art, to wed the virtues of antiquity and modernity.

The problem of the relation of modern to ancient art and culture was one of supreme importance to the age that followed Winckelmann. Lessing and Herder, Goethe and Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Hölderlin, Kleist, and the Schlegels wrestled with this problem. It was complicated, moreover, by becoming identified to some extent with the problem of nature and culture which Rousseau had made one of the burning questions of the time, so that the highly cultivated Greeks of the age of Pericles were frequently looked upon as a primi-

tive "Urvolk," and yet their literature revered as the very acme of poetic perfection.

These two problems, thus closely related, interested Kleist intensely; but he, like Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, sought their solution in going not backward but forward, not in emphasizing exclusively one member of the antithesis, but in combining both to a new and higher synthesis. They required in a work of art richness of content as well as perfection of form; they wanted finiteness and infinity, typical beauty and individual truth. "Im Individuellen objektiv zu sein" was an early ideal of Friedrich Schlegel's;⁸ and the young Wackenroder saw in the countenance of one of Raphael's Madonnas "die überirdische, allgemeine Form griechischer Idealschönheit mit sprechendster, anziehender Individualität aufs glücklichste vereinigt."⁹

Schlegel hoped to unite the merits of ancient and modern literature: "Aus dem, was die Modernen wollen, muss man lernen, was die Poesie werden soll: aus dem, was die Alten tun, was sie sein muss"; "in den Alten sieht man den vollendeten Buchstaben der ganzen Poesie: in den Neueren ahnet man den werdenden Geist."¹⁰ The question of the reconciliation of antique and modern styles appeared to him "gerade die höchste aller Fragen über die Kunst der Poesie."¹¹ Far from wishing to reject the element of ancient classicality which they found, at times too narrowly conceived, in the

works of Goethe and Schiller, these young writers desired to enrich this classicality and suffuse it with a modern spirit. They believed themselves, not without reason, to have a juster and completer conception of the very ideals toward which Goethe and Schiller were striving.

Already the author of *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, declaring that the art of the ancient poet was one of limitation whereas that of the modern poet is one of infinity, had sought as the highest desideratum a fusion of these two.¹² As a dramatist he subsequently pursued, as Petersen¹³ has pointed out, substantially the same ideal as Kleist: in *Wallenstein*, *Maria Stuart*, *Die Braut von Messina* he aims to combine the analytical technique of the Greek tragedy with Shakespeare's tragedy of character and his richer theatrical life. In the Prologue to *Wallenstein* Schiller lays out for the German drama a course midway between Shakespeare and antiquity, a course in which he himself vacillated, but which Kleist pursued with greater success.¹⁴ A few keen contemporaries detected this aim in Schiller's last dramas: the young Wilhelm Grimm saw in *Tell* an attempt to combine the antique and the Romantic, and of *Die Braut von Messina*, Schiller himself admitted this intention.¹⁵

The early Romanticists regarded Goethe as tending even more decidedly in the same direction. Friedrich Schlegel writes to his brother on August

26, 1797, with the highest praise of *Hermann und Dorothea*: this poem seems to him obviously intended to be as much in the ancient Homeric style as is possible in view of the Romantic spirit which everywhere pervades it and which puts it far above Homer. It might be called a Romanticized epic, he thinks, for even where it is most antique and naïve and seems most Homeric, it displays a consciousness and self-restraint which are unlike and superior to Homer.¹⁶ It is interesting again to note that the Romantic qualities which the writer finds in Goethe's work are those of conscious and self-limiting art.¹⁷

Long before the author of *Faust* symbolized in the marriage of Faust and Helena the union of antique classicism and modern Romanticism, the foremost Romanticists saw in Goethe the very incorporation of their chief literary ideal. Friedrich Schlegel writes to his brother as early as February 27, 1794: "Das Problem unsrer Poesie scheint mir die Vereinigung des Wesentlich-Modernen mit dem Wesentlich-Antiken; wenn ich hinzusetze, dass Goethe, der erste einer ganz neuen Kunstperiode, einen Anfang gemacht hat, sich diesem Ziele zu nähern, so wirst Du mich wohl verstehen."¹⁸ In this sense he calls Goethe's poetry, somewhat later, "ein merkwürdiges und grosses Symptom . . . die Morgenröte echter Kunst und reiner Schönheit."¹⁹ These words are significant not only for the relations of the early Romanticists to Goethe,

but also for the importance of the ideal toward which they considered themselves, like him, to be striving: Schlegel conceived it as so momentous that a new epoch of art could be dated from it, and so lofty that even the Goethe of 1794 or 1795 could only be said to have begun to approach it. One thinks of the exalted words in which Heinrich von Kleist spoke of his own similar ideal.²⁰

Novalis, too, beheld in Goethe the dawn of a new era and a new synthesis in poetry: "Wie episches, lyrisches und dramatisches Zeitalter in der Geschichte der griechischen Poesie einander folgten, so lösen sich in der Universalgeschichte der Poesie die antike, moderne und vereinigte Periode ab. . . . In Goethen scheint sich ein Kern dieser Vereinigung angesetzt zu haben."²¹ Friedrich Schlegel observes in a notebook of 1797: "Goethe ist kein Moderner, sondern ein Progressiver, also zugleich antik. Goethe ist . . . der erste poetische Universalist. In Goethe sind die Bestandteile des Modernen und des Romantischen garnicht geschieden."²² The early Romanticists not only ascribed to Goethe's poetry and derived from it those qualities of "universality" and "progressivity" which were their literary tenets,²³ but they saw in it also the approximate realization of the fusion, so ardently desired, of the antique with the modern, or, as Friedrich Schlegel calls it, the Romantic.

The author of the symposium on poetry speaks with high commendation of the combination of modern garb and ancient spirit in *Wilhelm Meister*, and continues: "Diese grosse Combination eröffnet eine ganz neue endlose Aussicht auf das, was die höchste Aufgabe aller Dichtkunst zu sein scheint, die Harmonie des Klassischen und des Romantischen. . . . Goethe hat sich . . . zu einer Höhe der Kunst heraufgearbeitet, welche zum erstenmal die ganze Poesie der Alten und der Modernen umfasst, und den Keim eines ewigen Fortschreitens enthält." The new spirit in literature which is now active, says its most prominent exponent, must take this direction and follow the leadership of the "progressive," "universal" Goethe, to whom and from whom all ways lead, who is, like Dante, not only the culmination of a past age, but the inaugurator of a new age of poetry.²⁴

Heinrich von Kleist seemed destined in the history of German letters to realize in dramatic form the dream which the early Romanticists so clearly visioned but which they lacked the creative power to embody in works of poetical art. The first Romantic group, with which we have been dealing, consisted of a few philosophers and critical theorists, a lyric poet who was lyric even in his novelistic works, a frail rhapsodist, and a prolific writer whose facile talent vacillated continually between

epic and lyric forms of expression. Over against these, uniquely gifted among all the writers of his time, stands Heinrich von Kleist, every inch a dramatic genius. Kleist's expressly dramatic endowment has made it difficult to associate him with the early Romanticists, so long as one believed that this group, which was certainly devoid of dramatists, was also without standards of literary form. As we have seen, the leaders of Romanticism were as firmly convinced of the necessity of form in art as were Kleist and the Classicists. They differed, however, somewhat from the Classicists as to the kind of form they wanted, and with the exception of Novalis, they were decidedly inferior both to Kleist and to Goethe and Schiller in ability to incorporate concretely their theoretical convictions.

Kleist's Romantic spirit has prevented his classification with Goethe and Schiller; his firm dramatic form has prevented the acknowledgment of his inner kinship with the early Romanticists, who wished, as he did, to be both "Classic" and "Romantic." They sought their end, rather naïvely, by a process of addition; Kleist, one might say, by a process of multiplication: they tried to scale heaven by piling the epic and the lyric on the drama; Kleist, with much more native ability and surer tact, developed one form, the dramatic, and achieved in it something very like the synthesis to which they aspired. Kleist's plays are superior to

the epic-lyric-dramatic creations of Tieck not only as drama, but as the dramatic fulfilment of the early Romantic program. Heine wrote of Kleist: "Er ist ganz Romantiker, will nur das Romantische geben und gibt dieses durch lauter plastische Gestalten, so dass er wieder äusserlich ganz Plastiker ist."²⁵ But this combination of plasticity of form with Romantic color and content was precisely what the Schlegels attempted, and their ineffectual performance in *Ion* and *Alarkos* is not a fair basis for differentiating their ideals from Kleist's. What happens when a genuine poet and dramatist conceives these ideals we can see, I believe, in the works of Heinrich von Kleist.

In so far as poetic genius is found among the early Romanticists, it is chiefly of a lyric nature. The temper of Kleist's whole life and work, on the other hand, is intensely dramatic. That he was capable of lyric feeling, and could write lyrically beautiful verse, is attested by passages in his plays. One can find also, though very rarely, in his prose, a piece of description that is "Romantic" in the popular sense, for example, the following in *Das Erdbeben in Chili*: "Indessen war die schönste Nacht herabgestiegen, voll wundermilden Duftes, so silberglänzend und still, wie nur ein Dichter davon träumen mag. Überall, längs der Talquelle, hatten sich, im Schimmer des Mondscheins, Menschen niedergelassen, und bereiteten sich sanfte Lager von Moos und Laub. . . . Sie fanden einen

prachtvollen Granatapfelbaum, der seine Zweige,
voll duftender Früchte, weit ausbreitete; und die
Nachtigall flötete im Wipfel ihr wollüstiges Lied.

. . . Der Baumschatten zog, mit seinen verstreut-
ten Lichtern, über sie hinweg.”²⁶ Of Kleist’s few
lyric poems, the little idyll “Der Schrecken im
Bade” contains examples of “Romantic” descrip-
tion and animation of nature.²⁷ But these instances
are few and inconspicuous; Kleist’s rigorously dra-
matic sense and will kept him from expanding in
his plays and narratives powers which he undoub-
tedly possessed.

Kleist’s works are poignantly personal in char-
acter: he gives himself in his dramas; he presents,
in extremely individual personages, his own inner
conflicts and feelings. Yet he pours this content
not into lyric but into dramatic molds. How glow-
ingly personal, for example, is *Penthesilea*, how
saturated with the poet’s own emotion, yet how
dramatic! Penthesilea herself is a mystery and a
dream, and she comes out of a shadowy country
on the borderland between myth and reality.
From the time she first bursts upon the astonished
Greeks and Trojans by the Scamandros until her
extraordinary death, she is a vision of exotic
charm, a creature of poetic fancy, a personification
of Kleist’s own soul, winsome and terrible. Yet
this play, even more than *Käthchen von Heilbronn*,
to which Kleist felt it closely related, demon-
strates the power of a truly dramatic genius to

make the Romantic dream-world vivid and real. For all their epic recitals, for all their soft lyric and idyllic passages, for all their miraculous events, these plays possess a tridimensional plasticity far different from the mistiness of Tieck's fairy-tale dramas.

Adam Müller, in a letter to Gentz, testifies to Kleist's intention of making *Penthesilea* un-antique; on the other hand he deplores the fact that Kleist is all too antique and evinces too little sympathy with the late-Romantic allegorical poetry which he, Müller, found so congenial. But when Kleist, to please him, writes an allegorical poem, *Der Engel am Grabe des Herrn*, to accompany a pictorial treatment of the same subject, Müller finds the representation too sharp and dramatic: "Auch dort offenbart sich überall das antike, die Gestaltung über die Allegorie weit erhebende Gemüt. Hartmanns Bild in seiner Farbenpracht, in seinen bestimmten Umrissen ist dennoch nur eine Hieroglyphe, gegen die Sinnlichkeit und Wirklichkeit der Kleistschen Erzählung gehalten."²⁸

Kleist is a dramatist even in his narratives. There are no more descriptions for their own sake in his stories than in his plays. Descriptions of places and states are natural and appropriate in the epic, yet Kleist substitutes for them everywhere motion and gesture. The style of his chief narrative work, *Michael Kohlhaas*, is not so much epic

as dramatic. Instead of epic leisureliness of tempo and breadth of recital we have, tersely presented, a concentrated, steadily impelled action; every speech is accompanied by gesture and movement; the frequency of "indem," introducing simultaneous action, becomes actually monotonous. We do not hear Kleist's story; we see it, and we see it in dramatic motion. Even such a dry matter as the deliberation of the Saxon State Council on Kohlhaas' case is recounted with a complete accompaniment of characteristic action: "Der Kämmerer, indem er für ihn und den Kurfürsten Stühle von der Wand nahm und auf eine verbindliche Weise ins Zimmer setzte, sagte. . . . Der Prinz, indem er den Stuhl, ohne sich zu setzen, in der Hand hielt, und ihn ansah, versicherte. . . . Der Kurfürst, den der Junker bei diesen Worten betroffen ansah, wandte sich, indem er über das ganze Gesicht rot ward, und trat ans Fenster. . . . Der Graf Kallheim, nach einer verlegenen Pause von allen Seiten, sagte. . . . Der Mundschenk, Herr Kinz von Tronka, während der Kurfürst mit ungewissen Blicken an seinen Tisch trat, nahm das Wort und sagte": — all this in one page of print!²⁹ Only toward the end of the story, under the influence of the political and supernatural interests of later Romanticism, an epic laxity is perceptible: episodes and personages unnecessary to the plot are introduced and treated at length, and a too frequent use of "es traf sich, dass" betrays the lack of dramatic cogency.

One might see in Kleist's best narrative works a synthesis of literary styles such as the Romantics were fond of experimenting with. His novelistic technique compares with that of the traditional novel about as relief compares with painting; and it differs from dramatic technique no more than relief differs from sculpture in the round. The narrator shows us only the essential events and characters in significant relations, plastically enhanced but not detached from the background. It seems almost as though he so often avoided direct discourse in his stories lest he actually pass over from epic to dramatic form. At any rate his transference, probably more unconscious than deliberate, of dramatic procedure to the novel, marks a new departure in the history of the latter genre.

Kleist is sometimes looked upon as the founder of modern realism, and hence as being thoroughly un-Romantic. But the realistic details in his prose works, for example, in *Kohlhaas*, hardly suffice for such a classification; there is much realistic detail, for example, in *Hermann und Dorothea* and in *Wallenstein*, but we should hardly call their authors realists. Rather, the whole spirit and tone of Kleist's works, including *Kohlhaas*, are decidedly idealistic, and not at all of the nature of modern realism. Kleist's dramatic plasticity and vividness are often mistaken for realism. The latter might be predicated with some justice of *Der zerbrochene Krug*, which in locality and treatment is the most

un-Romantic of Kleist's works. He himself was conscious of its unique character, for he wrote, "es ist nach dem Teniers gearbeitet, und würde nichts wert sein, käme es nicht von einem, der in der Regel lieber dem göttlichen Raphael nachstrebt."³⁰ This play was limited, unlike any other of Kleist's writings, so far as we know, by a definite model, and its peculiar style is the result of strong pictorial suggestion. Kleist was not greatly in error when he ascribed the original painting, from an etching of which he worked, to a Dutch master,³¹ for Debucourt, as a glance at his work shows,³² was strongly influenced by the Dutch school, and it was, indeed, the style of Teniers and Jan Steen that Kleist copied in his rustic comedy.

The literary tendency of Kleist and the early Romanticists was not revolutionary but evolutionary; they were not, and did not consider themselves to be, hostile to the Classicism of Weimar; instead, their critical and poetical utterances show how overwhelmingly they were still under its influence. They continued the principal ideals of Goethe and Schiller, though not always with the same methods; especially did they carry on the attempt, which the poets of Weimar had begun, to unite the spirits and styles of ancient and modern poetry. The drama of Heinrich von Kleist, which most successfully embodies their intent, is seen to be, like the work of his great musical con-

temporary, Beethoven, still predominantly Classical, but with the addition of a new spirit which we call, for lack of a better term, "Romantic."

The early Romanticists did not wish to destroy Classical form, but only to modify it, to soften its premature rigidity and "open" it so as to include that element which they called in general "das Unendliche." It was the element that Novalis missed so painfully in *Wilhelm Meister*: the world of the infinite, which cannot be compressed into form but is by nature formless, the great "Jenseits" beyond the artificial borders of earthly time and space. They wanted the presence or suggestion of this element in poetry. Schleiermacher expressed this idea when he said: "Auf dem Endlichen ruht der Glanz des Unendlichen"; Novalis tried to define it in the words: "Indem ich . . . dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Schein gebe, so romantisiere ich es";³³ and something like this is brought to pass in *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, where, as it were, a ray from infinity falls on the doings of this world. Novalis felt that for Goethe finite form and reality had become ends in themselves; he would have taken great comfort in the words which Goethe set, with more Romantic than Classic feeling, at the end of *Faust*: "Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis."

Friedrich Schlegel once defined the early Romantic ideal of form in the following words: "Gebildet ist ein Werk, wenn es überall scharf

begrenzt, innerhalb der Grenzen aber grenzenlos und unerschöpflich ist.”³⁴ He dreamed of a poetic art that should unite the finite and the infinite, that should have the typical simplicity of the antique and yet express the complex soul of the modern individual with its infinite passions and longings. His dream was virtually fulfilled in the finest works of Heinrich von Kleist, which combine plasticity with color, and definiteness of form with a certain openness to the infinite. *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* is perhaps the best example of this combination of firm dramatic structure and sharp delineation of character with the suggestion of mysteriousness and spaciousness, the coalescence of “Diesseits” and “Jenseits,” actuality and dream. The peculiar charm of Kleist’s dramatic style at its best lies in just this reconciliation of qualities which are commonly called “Classic” and “Romantic”; and this was the ideal of early German Romanticism.

The author of *Robert Guiskard* manifestly attempted a fusion of the characteristic and individual art of Shakespeare with the typifying and architectonic style of ancient tragedy. Here, as in *Der zerbrochene Krug*, the scene opens just before the catastrophe, and we behold the unrolling of past events. Here Kleist’s diction is most nearly antique: the majestic sweep of his verses, the sonorous epithets, the order of words, as well as distinct traces of ancient drama, give evidence of

the poet's desire to emulate Sophokles. Fate hovers in the background, and the Norman populace has almost the character and function of a Greek chorus. With these statuesque and normalizing elements Kleist seeks to unite the greater freedom and picturesqueness of Shakespeare; he seems to derive tragedy from character, and through modernisms and anachronisms in language he counteracts, as in *Penthesilea*, the impression of conventionalized antiquity.

Kleist's dramatic production after *Guiskard* is a toilsome and circuitous pilgrimage to the heights which, with the passionate titanism of *Penthesilea*, he had thought to attain in one bold flight. Kleist never renounced the ideal which he had set himself in *Guiskard*: *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* is only his last and most successful approximation to it, and he himself would probably not have regarded even this play as final. *Amphytrion* is, as Goethe correctly judged,³⁵ an unsuccessful attempt to combine modern and antique, Christian and pagan mythology, an attempt quite in the synthetic tendency of the age. Even in such an occasional production as *Der zerbrochene Krug*, Kleist appears preoccupied with the problem of adapting ancient to modern dramatic technique.³⁶ *Penthesilea* shows, in style and diction, an antique cast like that of *Guiskard*, and on the other hand an intentional modernness. Traditional forms are filled with a new meaning; classic names are re-

tained, but their bearers are sentimental modern individuals of complex psychology. The post-classic Greek legend which Kleist here makes use of has been described as the most Romantic legend of antiquity, and his play as a Romantization of the ancient world. Zschokke in a review said of its author: "Er kommt mir wie ein werdender Shakespeare vor, der sich in den tragischen Formen des Sophokles bewegen möchte."³⁷

Kleist's last and finest play is quite "regular" in structure. In its inward and outward technique it would be difficult to find anything revolutionary. Of all Kleist's plays it conforms most nearly to the canons of form upheld by Goethe and Schiller. But into this form Kleist has poured a new content which differs from that of the classics of Weimar. Within limits as strict as ancient or modern Classicism could have prescribed, he opens endless vistas into the depths of the modern soul and into another world; an action of astounding reality evanesces into the realm of dreams; the chaste simplicity and restraint of ancient tragedy is wondrously blended with the complex richness and characterizing colorfulness of Shakespeare. Even traditional figures, such as that of the confidant, in Hohenzollern, are enriched with individual traits, and in the case of the hero, Kleist employs an extremity of characterization well-nigh pathological. We are not startled to find the classical laurel and the night-flowers of Romanticism growing together in the palace-garden of Fehrbellin.

The poetic conciliation which Kleist here achieved with such consummate genius seems symbolized, in ethical terms, in the substance of the play: neither the Elector, the majestic representative of "die starre Antike," nor the Romantic Prince, "das deutsche Herz" (784-787), proves victorious; neither the impersonal rigidity of law nor the impetuous emotionalism of the individual is unconditionally vindicated, but the outcome is a kind of interpenetration of these two: individuality is disciplined but not suppressed, and law is softened and illuminated by love. It is indicative of Kleist's estimation of woman, so like the early Romanticists', that Natalie should be endowed from the beginning with that harmonious balance toward which the whole play tends: the principle of her heroic yet feminine soul is expressed in the words

Das Kriegsgesetz, das weiss ich wohl, soll herrschen,
Jedoch die lieblichen Gefühle auch. (1129-1130)

Wilhelm Grimm showed a profound understanding of the meaning of this play when he wrote of it to Arnim: "Ich habe niemals schöner die Macht des Gesetzes und die Anerkennung des Höheren, vor dem auch das Gesetz zerfällt, dargestellt gefunden." *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* constitutes not only the most successful dramatic embodiment of one of the chief ideals of that entire age, namely, the fusion of antique and modern poetic styles; it is also the finest example of that

union of German Classicism and Romanticism which the early Romanticists so sincerely desired.

Like them, however, Kleist did not consider that he had reached his goal or fulfilled his mission. His attitude, like theirs, was one of expectancy and longing. They felt themselves to be standing on the threshold of a new age; they looked forward to new aspirations rather than backward upon past attainments; they were not wholly happy in their time, but were conscious of being in advance of it and belonging to the future. They hoped to usher in a new philosophy and a new religion, a new art and a new literature, for which even Goethe and Schiller had only prepared the way. Romantic philosophy shares this futurism: Fichte, in the third of his *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, says of the new philosophy, "Sie ist garnicht zu Hause in diesem Zeitalter, sondern sie ist ein Vorgriff der Zeit und ein schon im Voraus fertiges Lebenselement eines Geschlechts, das in demselben erst zum Lichte erwachsen soll. Auf das gegenwärtige Geschlecht muss sie Verzicht tun."³⁸

Novalis, as well as the poet of *Guiskard*, believed himself on the verge of a discovery momentous in the history of mankind: "Eine Idee such ich jetzt zu bearbeiten. . . . Mir scheint es eine sehr grosse, sehr fruchtbare Idee . . . da es nichts minder betrifft, als die mögliche, evidente Realisierung der *kühnsten* Wünsche und Ahn-

dungen jeder Zeit. . . . Auf meiner Entdeckungsreise . . . bin ich . . . auf . . . Küsten gestossen, die vielleicht einen neuen wissenschaftlichen Kontinent begrenzen.”³⁹ But he did not live to make his discovery, nor to carry out the vast plans with which his mind was teeming during his last days. Neither did Kleist ever complete *Guiskard*, although the idea of it haunted him for years.⁴⁰

It is the tragedy of Heinrich von Kleist and the early Romanticists that, though they were of their time and eager to be effective in it, they did not win popularity, and their ideals did not find the necessary resonance. Their careers were cut short or deflected by untoward circumstances, and their great promises remained unrealized. Kleist early felt himself to be “ein Schriftsteller, den die Zeit nicht tragen kann.”⁴¹ He found no stage adequate to his needs, and was constrained to postpone his hopes to an indefinite future. The words which he addressed to Goethe concerning the performance of *Penthesilea* are characteristic of his own “Zeitgefühl” as well as that of early Romanticism: “So sehr ich auch sonst in jedem Sinne gern dem Augenblick angehörte, so muss ich doch in diesem Fall auf die Zukunft hinaussehen.”⁴² And Goethe’s answer is equally characteristic in its this-worldliness and confidence in the present: “Ein Jude, der auf den Messias, ein Christ, der aufs neue Jerusalem, und ein Portugiese, der auf den Don Sebastian

wartet, machen mir kein grösseres Missbehagen.”⁴³ Goethe had little patience with “Sehnsucht”; Kleist and the Romanticists were filled with it. A. W. Schlegel thus differentiated ancient and modern poetry: “Die Poesie der Alten war die des Besitzes, die unsrige ist die der Sehnsucht; jene steht fest auf dem Boden der Gegenwart, diese wiegt sich zwischen Erinnerung und Ahndung.”⁴⁴

The literary physiognomy of Kleist and the early Romanticists is strikingly youthful; Goethe, and even Schiller, seem middle-aged by contrast. Not only because of early death did the works of these men remain incomplete and fragmentary, but because they set themselves, with youthful ardor, ideals which were beyond their powers and which could not be realized within a lifetime. Measured by these ideals, their performances seemed to them relative failures. Kleist confessed, after his collapse over *Guiskard*, that his conception of his genius was only the shadow of what it had been, and that the beauty of his works existed only in his imagination.⁴⁵ And the young Friedrich Schlegel, whose bold trumpet-blasts hailed the dawn of a new age of poetry, would have looked with disdain upon most of the products which subsequently made German Romanticism popular. But we, after the lapse of more than a century, can survey with more justice both their aspirations and their achievements, and we can discern relationships in literary character and

aims which were by no means clear to the men of that time. The golden age heralded by the young leader of the Romanticists has not yet come, and the thousand years prophesied by the despairing poet of *Guiskard* have not yet run out; but when the monument of which he spoke is reared, it will bear, beside the name of that future genius, the names of Heinrich von Kleist and those early Romanticists who shared his vision.

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations in the notes refer to the following authors and works; Roman numerals designate volumes; Arabic numbers, pages and lines.

- Ath.* *Athenäum.* Eine Zeitschrift von August Wilhelm Schlegel und Friedrich Schlegel. 3 vols. München (Meyer u. Jessen), 1924. (Neudrucke Romanischer Seltenheiten, Nr. 1.)
- Briefe* *Friedrich Schlegels Briefe an seinen Bruder August Wilhelm.* Herausgegeben von Oskar Walzel. Berlin (Speyer u. Peters), 1890.
- Briefw.* *Novalis' Briefwechsel mit Friedrich und August Wilhelm, Charlotte und Caroline Schlegel.* Herausgegeben von J. M. Raich. Mainz (Kirchheim), 1880.
- F. S.* *Friedrich Schlegel, 1794–1802. Seine prosaischen Jugendschriften.* Herausgegeben von Jakob Minor. 2 vols. Wien (Konegen), 1882. (For the sake of convenience, all Friedrich Schlegel's early writings except those now accessible in the reprint of the *Athenäum* are quoted from this collection.)
- G.* *Goethes Werke.* Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Grossherzogin Sophie von Sachsen. Weimar (Böhlau), 1887–. (In references to this edition, Roman numerals are used for "Abteilung," Arabic numbers for volume and page.)
- H.* *Friedrich Hölderlins Sämtliche Werke und Briefe.* Kritisch-historische Ausgabe von Franz Zinker-nagel. 5 vols. Leipzig (Insel-Verlag), 1914–1926.
- K.* *Heinrich von Kleists Werke.* Im Verein mit Georg Minde-Pouet und Reinhold Steig herausgegeben von Erich Schmidt. 5 vols. Leipzig u. Wien (Bibliographisches Institut), [1904–1905].

- N. *Novalis. Schriften.* Herausgegeben von Jakob Minor. 4 vols. Jena (Diederichs), 1923.
- S. *Schillers Sämtliche Werke.* Säkularausgabe. 16 vols. Stuttgart u. Berlin (Cotta), [1904-1905].
- W. *Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder. Werke und Briefe.* Herausgegeben von Friedrich von der Leyen. 2 vols. Jena (Diederichs), 1910.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 105.
2. *Lucinde*, Leipzig (Insel), 1919, pp. 28, 29.
3. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 18.
4. Cf. Oskar Walzel, *Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit*, Leipzig (Insel), 1922, p. 91.
5. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 95 ff.
6. Cf. Rudolf Unger, *Herder, Novalis u. Kleist. Studien über die Entwicklung des Todesproblems in Denken u. Dichten vom Sturm u. Drang zur Romantik*, Frankfurt a. M. (Diesterweg), 1922, pp. 24 ff., 43 ff.
7. Cf. Wilhelm Hans, *Kant und die Romantik, Euphorion*, XIII (1906), pp. 502-514.
8. Cf. Oskar Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, II, 5th ed., Leipzig (Teubner), 1926, p. 75.
9. *Ath.*, III, 2, pp. 267, 337. The same figure is used, curiously enough, by Hölderlin: "Kant ist der Moses unserer Nation, der sie aus der ägyptischen Erschlaffung in die freie einsame Wüste seiner Spekulation führt, und der das energetische Gesetz vom heiligen Berge bringt" (H., IV, p. 381).
10. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 268.
11. F. S., I, p. 110, 10-14.
12. *Briefe*, p. 235.
13. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 32; II, 2, p. 340.
14. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 77.
15. Cf. Ernst Gelpcke, *Fichte und die Gedankenwelt des Sturm und Drang. Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Ergründung der Wurzeln des deutschen Idealismus*, Leipzig (Meiner), 1928, p. 285.

CHAPTER II

1. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 25.
2. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 350.
3. N., I, p. 112.
4. *Caroline. Briefe aus der Frühromantik*. Nach Georg Waitz vermehrt herausgegeben von Erich Schmidt. 2 vols. Leipzig (Insel), 1913, e.g. I, pp. 139 ff., 201 ff.
5. H., IV, pp. 361-364.
6. Cf. my article, "Rational and Emotional Elements in Heinrich von Kleist," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, XXXVII (1922), pp. 321-327.
7. K., V, p. 188, 19-33.
8. S., XII, pp. 177, 17-24; 180, 10-15.
9. Cf. *Schillers Briefe*, herausg. v. Fritz Jonas, Stuttgart (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt), o. J., III, p. 481; Goethe to Eckermann, Nov. 14, 1823; K., V, p. 316, 23-25; p. 427, 27-34; p. 189, 24-32; p. 222, 17-20; p. 328, 4-11.
10. N., II, p. 301, No. 389.
11. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 33.
12. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 85.
13. K., IV, p. 107, 9; V, p. 430, 9-11.
14. K., V, p. 133, 26-p. 134, 10.
15. K., III, p. 378, 24-26.
16. K., V, p. 429, 24-33.
17. W., I, pp. 184-186.

CHAPTER III

1. Arthur O. Lovejoy in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XXXIX (1924), pp. 229 ff.; XLII (1927), pp. 921 ff.
2. Cf. Hennig Brinkmann, *Die Idee des Lebens in der deutschen Romantik*, Augsburg (Filser), 1926, p. 60.
3. *Briefe*, pp. 303, 385, 436, 477.
4. N., III, p. 298, No. 802.
5. Ricarda Huch, *Die Romantik*, Leipzig (Haessel), 1924, I, pp. 130-131.
6. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 51; III, 1, p. 175.

7. A. W. Schlegel to Fouqué, March 12, 1806; *Briefe an Friedrich Baron de la Motte Fouqué*, etc., herausg. v. Albertine Baronin de la Motte Fouqué, Berlin (Adolf), 1848, p. 358.
8. I. Rouge, *Frédéric Schlegel et la Genèse du Romantisme Allemand, 1791-1797*, Paris (Fontemoing), 1904, p. ix.
9. *Österreichischer Beobachter*, Wien, Dec. 24, 1811 (No. 351).

CHAPTER IV

1. *Briefw.*, p. 137.
2. N., II, pp. 307-308, No. 409.
3. *Ath.*, III, 2, pp. 184-185.
4. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 141; II, 2, p. 222.
5. F. S., II, p. 325, 10.
6. N., IV, p. 174.
7. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 92-93.
8. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 125.
9. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 89-90.
10. K., V, p. 371, 28-29.
11. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 14.
12. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 173.
13. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 90.
14. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 91-94.
15. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 90.
16. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 111.
17. H., III, p. 330.
18. K., V, p. 429, 26.
19. H., III, p. 330.
20. N., II, pp. 306-307.
21. N., III, p. 22, No. 72.
22. W., I, pp. 189-190.
23. *Briefe*, p. 504.
24. N., IV, p. 173.
25. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 81.
26. F. S., I, p. 7, 2-3; *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 33.
27. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 54.
28. F. S., II, p. 187, 27-p. 188, 2.
29. N., II, p. 259, No. 270.

30. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 84.
31. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 106.
32. N., III, p. 179, No. 57; similarly II, p. 116, No. 25; III, p. 299, No. 809.
33. N., III, p. 63, No. 317.
34. K., V, p. 328, 1-3.
35. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 71.
36. N., III, p. 369, No. 1092.
37. N., II, pp. 114-115, No. 21.
38. N., II, pp. 304-305, No. 406.
39. N., IV, pp. 166-168.
40. N., IV, p. 174.
41. K., V, p. 371, 27-29.
42. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 154-155.
43. F. S., II, p. 191, No. 57.
44. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 69.
45. Cf. *Ath.*, II, 2, pp. 318-319; III, 1, pp. 129 ff., 142 ff.; III, 2, pp. 236-237, 243 ff.
46. F. S., II, pp. 415-416.
47. W., II, pp. 127 ff., 181-185, 195-198.

CHAPTER V

1. Cf. Franz Schultz in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft u. Geistesgeschichte*, II (1924), pp. 355 ff.
2. F. S., II, p. 191, No. 60.
3. S., XII, p. 222, 30 ff.
4. H., IV, p. 425.
5. F. S., I, p. 108, 2-3.
6. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 77, 78.
7. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 122.
8. *Europa. Eine Zeitschrift*, Frankfurt a. M. (Wilmans) 1803, I, 1, p. 32.
9. *Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Gentz und Adam Heinrich Müller, 1800-1829*, Stuttgart (Cotta), 1857, p. 17.
10. *Briefe*, p. 125.
11. F. S., II, p. 131, 38-43.
12. H., III, p. 11.
13. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 18.

14. F. S., I, p. 59, 8-9.
15. *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 9, 11.
16. *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 10-11.
17. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 9, 16.
18. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 10.
19. Cf. Josef Körner, *Romantiker und Klassiker*. Die Brüder Schlegel in ihren Beziehungen zu Schiller und Goethe. Berlin (Askanischer Verlag), 1924, p. 103.
20. *Was gilt es in diesem Kriege?* K., IV, p. 116, 24 ff.
21. Cf. Paul Kluckhohn, *Die deutsche Romantik*, Bielefeld und Leipzig (Velhagen und Klasing), 1924, pp. 157 ff.; cf. also the same author's *Persönlichkeit und Gemeinschaft. Studien zur Staatsauffassung der deutschen Romantik*, Halle (Niemeyer), 1925.
22. J. G. Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, herausgegeben von I. H. Fichte, Freiburg u. Tübingen, 1881, p. 33 (3. Rede).
23. 6. Rede, *ibid.*, p. 79.
24. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 22.
25. Cf. F. S., II, p. 430, 15-16; *Europa*, I, 1, p. 43 f.
26. I. Rouge, *Frédéric Schlegel*, pp. 90-91.
27. *Ath.*, II, 2, pp. 226-227.
28. Arthur O. Lovejoy in *Modern Language Notes*, XXXII (1917), p. 73.
29. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 71-72.
30. E.g., *Ath.*, II, 2, pp. 181-192.
31. Cf. Walzel in *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, XIII (1898), p. xxii.
32. F. S., I, pp. 87, 102, 110, 127, 154.
33. F. S., I, p. 130, 29-30.
34. F. S., I, p. 127, 24 ff.
35. F. S., I, p. 140, 29-31.
36. F. S., I, p. 176, 31-38.
37. Cf. Paul Vogel, *Das Bildungsideal der deutschen Frühromantik*, Berlin (Weidmann), 1915, p. 3.
38. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 14.
39. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 32; II, 2, p. 430.
40. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 3.
41. *Briefe*, p. 165.

42. S., XII, p. 7, 10-15.
43. F. S., I, pp. 116-117.
44. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 7.
45. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 27.
46. N., II, p. 26.
47. *Herders Sämtliche Werke*, herausg. v. Bernhard Suphan, Berlin (Weidmann), 1877-, XIII, pp. 192-193.
48. K., IV, p. 137, 15-17.
49. *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, 2629-2631.
50. S., XII, p. 228, 8-22.
51. S., XII, p. 224, 5 ff.; *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 157-158; *Phöbus*, VIII. Stück (Aug., 1808), pp. 11-12, 27-28.
52. S., XII, p. 224, 29-30.
53. Walzel, S., XI, p. lxiii; cf. also Julius Petersen, "Das goldene Zeitalter bei den deutschen Romantikern," in *Die Ernte* (Festschrift für Muncker), Halle (Niemeyer), 1926, p. 134.
54. F. S., II, p. 188, No. 38.
55. S., XII, p. 163, 4-12.
56. N., III, p. 370, No. 1095.
57. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 111.
58. K., V, p. 209, 6-8.
59. *Briefe*, p. 124.
60. K., I, p. 27*.
61. Cf. Hanna Hellmann, *Heinrich von Kleist. Darstellung des Problems*, Heidelberg (Winter), 1911, p. 16.
62. N., II, p. 198, No. 68.
63. N., II, p. 287, No. 336.
64. N., III, p. 117, No. 528.
65. N., III, p. 105, No. 474.
66. N., IV, p. 7. Here Novalis, with patent allusion to Schiller's *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais*, goes beyond Schiller, optimistically approving, instead of censuring, the persistent quest for truth.
67. N., II, p. 191, No. 51.
68. N., IV, p. 224.
69. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 108.
70. K., IV, p. 138, 12.

CHAPTER VI

1. Kuno Francke, *Social Forces in German Literature*. A Study in the History of Civilization, New York (Holt), 1896, p. 401.

2. Richard Ullmann and Helene Gotthard, *Geschichte des Begriffes "Romantisch" in Deutschland*. Vom ersten Aufkommen des Wortes bis ins 3. Jahrzehnt des 19. Jahrhunderts, Berlin (Ebering), 1927, pp. 1, 7, 359.

3. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 5th ed., Leipzig (Teubner), 1923, pp. 28–30, 45.

4. *Briefw.*, p. 87.

5. G., IV, 13, p. 226.

6. Caroline. *Briefe aus der Frühromantik*, I, pp. 455–456.

7. *Ibid.*, II, p. 6; *Europa*, I, 1, p. 51.

8. *Briefw.*, pp. 146–147.

9. *Die Gemälde*, *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 39–151.

10. *Briefw.*, p. 81; *Caroline*, I, p. 473.

11. Cf. Walzel in *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, Weimar, XIII, pp. xxxix, xl.

12. Walzel, *ibid.*, p. li.

13. G., I, 48, p. 122.

14. Cf. Walzel in *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, XIII, p. xxxi.

15. Cf. Walzel, *ibid.*, p. xxxii.

16. S., e.g., XII, p. 231.

17. *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und W. v. Humboldt*,

2. ver. Ausgabe, Stuttgart (Cotta), 1876, pp. 63–65.

18. Cf. Körner, *Romantiker und Klassiker*, p. 145.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 11 ff.

20. *Briefe an Friedrich Baron de la Motte Fouqué*, pp. 359 ff.;

cf. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, p. 207.

21. Cf. I. Rouge, *Frédéric Schlegel*, pp. 191 ff.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

23. W., II, pp. 63, 154.

24. *Briefe*, p. 156.

25. S., XII, p. 209, 23 ff.

26. F. S., I, p. 110, 10–16.

27. F. S., I, p. 133, 38–40.

28. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 64.
29. F. S., I, p. 79, 34–41.
30. Cf. Lovejoy in *Modern Language Notes*, XXXV (1920), pp. 138, 140; Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, p. 33.
31. Cf. Walzel in *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, XIII, p. xxiv.
32. Cf. Oskar Walzel, *Vom Geistesleben des 18. u. 19. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig (Insel), 1911, pp. 83 ff.
33. Goethe to Eckermann, May 12, 1825.
34. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 343.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 343–344.
36. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, pp. 57 ff.
37. Cf. Walzel in *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, XIII, p. xxxi.
38. N., II, p. 137.
39. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, pp. 57–58.
40. Marie Joachimi, *Die Weltanschauung der deutschen Romantik*, Jena (Diederichs), 1905, p. 75.
41. *Ath.*, II, 2, p. 280.
42. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 28–30.
43. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 85–86.
44. Cf. Georg Mehlis, *Die deutsche Romantik*, München (Rösl) 1922, pp. 123, 230.
45. *Briefw.*, p. 102.
46. G., IV, 15, p. 117.
47. *Caroline*, II, p. 6.
48. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 5th ed., p. 43.
49. *Briefe*, p. 431.
50. *Caroline*, I, p. xiv.
51. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 5th ed., p. 48.
52. Cf. Georg Stefanovsky, *Das Wesen der deutschen Romantik. Kritische Studien zu ihrer Geschichte*, Stuttgart (Metzler), 1923, p. 91.
53. Hermann August Korff, *Der Geist der Goethezeit. Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte*. Leipzig (Weber), 1923.
54. Cf. K., V, pp. 273, 26–27; 328, 11.
55. Cf. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, II, 5th ed., pp. 70–71.
56. Cf. Walzel, *Vom Geistesleben d. 18. u. 19. Jhs.*, pp. 195 ff.
57. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 153–154.

58. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 150, 152.
59. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 158, 165, 175.
60. N., III, p. 17.
61. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 148.
62. N., I, p. lvii.
63. Cf. Julius Petersen, *Die Wesensbestimmung der deutschen Romantik. Eine Einführung in die moderne Literaturwissenschaft*. Leipzig (Quelle u. Meyer), 1926, p. 92.
64. Cf. Oskar Walzel in *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde*, N. F. XIV (1922), p. 19.
65. Cf. Fritz Strich, *Deutsche Klassik u. Romantik*, 2d ed., 1924, p. 338.
66. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 180.
67. G., IV, 8, p. 97.
68. Goethe to Eckermann, April 18, 1827.
69. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 107.
70. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 4, 11.
71. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, II, 5th ed., pp. 94-95.
72. F. S., I, pp. 114, 16-17; 115, 14-16; 116, 1-2.
73. *Europa*, I, 1, p. 44.
74. N., II, p. 243, No. 236.
75. F. S., II, pp. 140 ff., 415-416; K., IV, pp. 116, 11-12; 260-261.
76. K., IV, p. 148, 6-12; V, p. 429, 27-28.
77. K., V, p. 373, 24-28.
78. K., IV, p. 122, 9-10.
79. Albert Fries in *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte*, IV (1904), pp. 232 ff.; *Stilistische und vergleichende Forschungen zu Heinrich von Kleist*, Berlin (Ebering), 1906.
80. Wilhelm Holzgraefe, *Schillersche Einflüsse bei Heinrich von Kleist*, Cuxhaven (Rauschenplat), 1902.
81. K., V, pp. 74, 5-15; 84, 2-5.
82. K., IV, p. 59, 14-16.
83. *Wallensteins Tod*, 2538-2539.
84. K., V, p. 233, 32-36.
85. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 14.
86. K., IV, p. 125.
87. K., V, pp. 367, 369; *Briefe*, pp. 341, 388.
88. K., IV, pp. 130-131.

89. K., V, p. 429, 27–28.
 90. K., V, p. 369, 25 ff.
 91. G., III, 3, p. 239.
 92. G., IV, 20, p. 16.
 93. J. J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, herausgegeben von Julius Lessing, 2. Aufl., Heidelberg (Weiss), 1882, p. 298.
 94. Cf. Strich, *Die Romantik als europäische Bewegung*, in *Festschrift Heinrich Wölfflin*, München (Schmidt), 1924, pp. 47 ff.

CHAPTER VII

1. W., I, pp. 126 ff.
2. K., IV, p. 75, 30 ff.
3. K., IV, p. 75, 19 ff.; *Briefw.*, p. 59; cf. August Sauer in *Euphorion*, XX (1913), p. 101.
4. N., III, p. 43, No. 214.
5. N., II, p. 18; cf. K., IV, p. 78, 24 ff.
6. Cf. Anton Lütteken, *Die Dresdener Romantik und Heinrich von Kleist*, Borna-Leipzig (Noske), 1917, p. 35.
7. Cf. Philipp Lersch, *Der Traum in der deutschen Romantik*, München (Hueber), 1923, pp. 35 ff.
8. Lütteken, *Die Dresdener Romantik u. Heinrich von Kleist*, p. 21.
9. *Briefe*, p. 538.
10. K., V, pp. 418, 7–11; 426–427; *Deutsche Rundschau* 161 (Oct. 1914), pp. 119–120.
11. K., V, p. 222.
12. K., V, p. 365, 4–5.
13. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 22–23.
14. W., II, p. 170.
15. I have treated this point more fully in *Heinrich von Kleist's Conception of the Tragic*, pp. 66–72.
16. K., V, pp. 389–390.
17. K., IV, p. 179; the *Berliner Abendblätter* are now available in a facsimile, edited by Minde-Pouet and published by Klinkhardt & Biermann, Leipzig, 1925.
18. K., V, pp. 424, 426–427.
19. K., V, p. 424.

20. Heinrich Meyer-Benfey, *Das Drama Heinrich von Kleists*, 2 vols., Göttingen (Hapke) (vol. II now Halle, Niemeyer), 1911 and 1913.
21. K., I, p. 30*, 36 ff.
22. Cf. Reinhold Steig, *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe*, Berlin u. Stuttgart (Spemann), 1901, pp. 442–443, 682; Flodoard Freiherr von Biedermann, *Heinrich von Kleists Gespräche. Nachrichten u. Überlieferungen aus seinem Umgange*. Leipzig (Hesse u. Becker) [1912], pp. 229–230.
23. K., IV, pp. 230–231.
24. Steig, *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe*, pp. 262 ff., 488 ff.
25. *Briefe*, p. 519.
26. *Kritische Schriften*, Leipzig (Brockhaus), 1848–1852, II, p. 187.
27. Halle (Schwetschke), 1840, p. 251.
28. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, p. 158.
29. Cf. Steig, *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe*, p. 646.
30. G., IV, 19, pp. 386, 401–404.
31. *Vermischte Schriften*, 2d ed., Wien, 1817, II, pp. 188–189.
32. Cf. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, II, 5th ed., p. 90.
33. K., V, p. 196, 28–33.

CHAPTER VIII

1. H., IV, p. 425.
2. H., IV., p. 531.
3. Cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung. Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin*. Leipzig (Teubner), 8th ed., 1922, p. 347.
4. H., I, pp. 304, 372.
5. H., IV, p. 503.
6. K., V, pp. 217, 26–27; 225, 12–13.
7. H., II, p. 178.
8. H., II, pp. 77, 78.
9. H., IV, p. 291; II, p. 78.
10. H., I, p. 85; cf. *Penthesilea*, 1286.
11. K., V, pp. 217, 33–34; 242, 29–30; 250, 1–3; 264, 11–13.

12. H., I, p. 85.
13. K., V, p. 295, 12.
14. H., IV, p. 105.
15. H., IV, p. 66.
16. H., IV, pp. 100-101.
17. H., IV, p. 543.
18. H., IV, p. 542.
19. H., IV, p. 533.
20. *Der Tod fürs Vaterland*, H., I, p. 128.
21. H., II, pp. 198, 205.
22. H., I, pp. 185-187.
23. H., IV, p. 391; cf. K., V, p. 47, 31-p. 48, 1.
24. Cf. Hans Brandenburg, *Friedrich Hölderlin. Sein Leben und sein Werk*, Leipzig (Haessel), 1924, p. 52.
25. H., II, p. 14.
26. H., IV, p. 79.
27. H., IV, pp. 80-81.
28. H., IV, p. 292.
29. *Schillers Briefe*, ed. Jonas, V, pp. 210-211.
30. H., II, pp. 84 f.
31. H., II, p. 237.
32. H., II, pp. 119, 120.
33. H., IV, p. 124.
34. H., II, p. 85.
35. H., IV, p. 540; cf. Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, 8th ed., p. 458.
36. H., II, p. 160.
37. H., II, p. 183.
38. K., V, p. 327, 6.
39. H., III, pp. 100-101.
40. H., III, p. 141; cf. K., III, p. 124.
41. H., I, p. 71.
42. H., II, pp. 191, 192.
43. H., II, p. 100.
44. H., III, p. 101.
45. H., II, pp. 44, 196.
46. H., II, p. 194.
47. K., V, pp. 326, 30 ff.; *Deutsche Rundschau*, 161 (Oct., 1914), pp. 116-117.

48. K., V, pp. 435, 5-7; 436, 22-23.
49. H., II, p. 94.
50. Cf. Brandenburg, *Hölderlin*, p. 73.
51. Cf. Wilhelm Böhm in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, IV (1926), 3, p. 424.
52. Cf. Brandenburg, *Hölderlin*, p. 100.
53. H., IV, p. 541.
54. K., V, pp. 287, 8-9, 20-22; 299, 27-29.
55. *An die Parzen*, H., I, p. 122.
56. K., V, pp. 150, 33 ff.; 259, 26 ff.; *Briefe*, p. 90.
57. Josef Körner, *Die Brüder Schlegel. Briefe aus frühen und späten Tagen der deutschen Romantik*, Berlin (Askanischer Verlag), I (1926), p. 17.
58. K., V, p. 418, 21-24.
59. Cf. *Briefe*, p. 101; *Briefw.*, p. 4.
60. *Briefe*, p. 70.
61. *Ibid.*
62. Cf. Carl Enders, *Friedrich Schlegel. Die Quellen seines Wesens und Werdens*, Leipzig (Haessel), 1913, p. 132.
63. *Caroline*, I, p. 471.
64. *Briefe*, p. 73.
65. Rouge, *Frédéric Schlegel*, p. 28.
66. *Briefe*, pp. 118, 126.
67. *Briefe*, pp. 174, 211; K., V, pp. 154, 13-14; 156, 30-32.
68. Cf. Ricarda Huch, *Die Romantik*, 1924, I, p. 49.
69. F. S., I, p. 116, 36-40.
70. Cf. Rouge, *Frédéric Schlegel*, p. 37.
71. *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 2 ff.
72. E.g., K., V, p. 46, 22 ff.
73. Cf. K., V, pp. 67-68; 132, 1-11.
74. *Lucinde*, Leipzig (Insel), 1919, pp. 74-75.
75. *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 10-11.
76. *Ath.*, II, 2, p. 312.
77. K., V, p. 358, 1-10; p. 380, 28-p. 381, 2.
78. K., I, p. 39*.
79. N., I, p. lxi.
80. Ernst Heilborn, *Novalis, der Romantiker*, Berlin (Reimer), 1901, p. 3.
81. N., I, p. lv.

82. *Briefw.*, p. 21; N., I, p. lix.
83. N., II, pp. 104, 211; III, p. 297.
84. N., III, p. 266, No. 566.
85. Cf. K., V, p. 490; and for the following: Heilborn, *Novalis*, p. 198.
86. *Briefw.*, p. 94.
87. N., I, pp. 114–118, 274.
88. K., V, p. 435, 27.
89. N., II, pp. 116, 134–135.
90. Joachimi, *Die Weltanschauung der deutschen Romantik*, p. 12.
91. N., I, p. xx.
92. *Ibid.*, p. li.
93. N., III, p. 123.
94. N., I, pp. lxxviii, lxxxii.
95. N., III, p. 265, No. 555.
96. N., I, pp. lxiii–lxiv.
97. N., I, pp. lxv–lxvi.
98. N., I, pp. 25, 26.
99. N., I, p. lxxx.
100. N., I, p. xvii.
101. N., II, p. 301, No. 389.
102. Cf. Heilborn, *Novalis*, p. 199.
103. *Novalis. Sämmtliche Werke*, herausg. von Carl Meissner, Florenz u. Leipzig (Diederichs), 1898, I, p. 52.
104. N., I, p. lvii.
105. N., III, pp. 355, No. 1036; 388, No. 1190.
106. N., I, p. lvi.
107. N., II, pp. 72–73; cf. K., V, p. 178, 8 ff.
108. N., II, pp. 70–71.
109. N., I, pp. 124–125.
110. Cf. Heilborn, *Novalis*, pp. 219 ff.
111. N., I, pp. xxi–xxii, lv.
112. N., I, p. lviii; III, pp. 323, No. 894; 325, No. 907.
113. N., III, p. 355, No. 1035.
114. Cf. Willy Pastor, *Novalis*, Berlin & Leipzig (Schuster & Loeffler) [1904], pp. 54–56.
115. N., II, p. 267; cf. K., V, p. 429.
116. N., II, p. 268.

117. Cf. Ricarda Huch, *Die Romantik*, 1924, II, p. 77.
118. N., II, p. 240, No. 236.
119. *Deutsche Rundschau*, 161 (Oct., 1914), p. 113.
120. Novalis, *Sämtl. Wke.*, ed. Meissner, I, p. 66; cf. also *Briefw.*, pp. 29, 57.
121. N., I, p. lxiv.
122. *Humanismus und Romantik*. Die Lebensauffassung der Neuzeit und ihre Entwicklung im Zeitalter Goethes, Leipzig (Weber), 1924, p. 137.
123. Cf. for a fuller development of this my article in *Modern Languages Notes*, XXXVII (1922), pp. 321-327.
124. K., V, pp. 16, 23-25; 31, 17-29.
125. K., V, p. 107, 32-33.
126. K., V, p. 219, 27-29.
127. N., II, pp. 74 ff.
128. N., III, p. 69, Nos. 336, 337.
129. N., II, pp. 192-193.
130. K., V, pp. 362, 9-12; 368, 29-369, 4.
131. Cf. Richard Weissenfels in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, I (1887), pp. 273 ff.
132. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 5th ed., p. 21.
133. N., III, p. 279, No. 672.
134. N., IV, p. 177.
135. K., V, pp. 435, 21-25; 436, 13-15.
136. N., II, p. 297, No. 374.
137. K., V, pp. 46, 22 ff.; 67-68; 127, 16 ff.; 132, 1-11; N., II, p. 275, No. 303; III, pp. 267, No. 570; 281, No. 683; 287, No. 731.

CHAPTER IX

1. Cf. Kluckhohn, *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 94.
2. Cf. Erwin Kircher, *Die Philosophie der Romantik*, Jena (Diederichs), 1906, p. 154.
3. K., V, p. 44, 13-16.
4. Cf. Karl Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte*, X, 4. Aufl., 1922, p. 55.
5. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, pp. 91, 182.
6. Cf. H. A. Korff, *Der Geist der Goethezeit*, I. Teil: *Sturm u. Drang*, Leipzig (Weber), 1923, p. 58.

7. K., V, pp. 114, 27-30; 119, 22-24; 129, 26-35; 130, 21-131, 37.
8. K., V, p. 129, 3 ff.
9. K., V, p. 131, 11-30.
10. K., V, p. 103, 7-10.
11. K., V, p. 222, 6-9.
12. K., V, p. 222, 25-p. 223, 3; contrast p. 116, 6-23.
13. K., V, p. 222, 9-13, 15 ff.
14. K., V, p. 352, 20-34.
15. Cf. August Sauer in *Euphorion*, XX (1913), pp. 93-104.
16. K., II, p. 183, 30-32.
17. Cf. Sauer in *Euphorion*, XX (1913), pp. 102-104.
18. K., IV, pp. 15-16.
19. *Briefwechsel zwischen Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, p. 128.
20. E.g., K., III, pp. 307; 339, 23 ff.; 351, 29-30; 352, 29-30; 375, 30.
21. K., III, pp. 377-390.
22. Cf. Steig, *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe*, p. v.
23. K., IV, pp. 127-128.
24. Eduard von Bülow, *Heinrich von Kleists Leben u. Briefe*, Berlin (Besser), 1848, pp. 72-73.
25. Georg Minde-Pouet, *Kleists letzte Stunden*, Berlin (Weidmann), 1926, pp. 17-18.
26. E.g., K., V, pp. 435, 25-26; 436, 16-18; 437, 5-8.
27. Cf. August Sauer, *Kleists Todeslitanei*, Prag (Bellmann), 1907.
28. K., II, p. 294, 4.
29. K., III, pp. 146, 13; 149, 7.
30. K., III, pp. 274, 17; 294, 12.
31. K., V, p. 434, 1.
32. Kluckhohn, *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 252.
33. N., II, p. 295, No. 365; cf. also *Briefw.*, pp. 106-107.
34. K., V, p. 239, 9-11.
35. *Sämtliche Werke*, herausg. v. Eduard Böcking, Leipzig (Weidmann), 1846, V, p. 16.
36. Cf. Lersch, *Der Traum in der deutschen Romantik*, p. 48.
37. K., I, p. 386, 1172-1174.
38. Novalis, *Sämtl. Wke.*, herausg. v. Meissner, I, p. 49.
39. K., V, p. 437, 4-5.

40. N., I, p. lxiii.
41. N., I, pp. 18, 20; *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 193.
42. K., V, p. 327, 2-17.
43. *Penthesilea*, 1682, 2864-2865.
44. *Briefw.*, p. 130.
45. N., I, pp. 30 ff.
46. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 198; N., I, p. 40.
47. N., II, p. 141.
48. N., IV, pp. 146, 221.
49. *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 2. Ausg., Berlin (Realschulbuchhandlung), 1806, p. 176.
50. *Von der Idee der Schönheit. In Vorlesungen*, etc. Berlin (Hitzig), 1809, p. 156.
51. K., V, p. 342, 15.
52. K., V, p. 214, 34-36.
53. K., V, p. 342, 27-34.
54. Cf. Biedermann, *Heinrich von Kleists Gespräche*, p. 103; H. Gaudig, *Heinrich von Kleist*, etc., Leipzig & Berlin (Teubner), 1918, p. 286.
55. K., V, p. 327, 6.
56. K., I, p. 54, 864-865; V, p. 270, 23.
57. K., V, p. 271, 27-28.
58. *Österreichischer Beobachter*, Wien, 1811, No. 351 (Dec. 24).
59. Steig, *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe*, p. 689.
60. K., V, p. 435, 5-17.
61. K., III, pp. 418, 27-30; 419, 20-21.
62. K., V, p. 436, 20-23.
63. K., V, p. 440, 4-13.
64. K., III, p. 121, 1771; p. 245, 3-4.
65. K., V, p. 433, 8-12.
66. Cf. K., III, p. 431, note to verse 1031.
67. Verses 1805-1807.
68. K., V, p. 430, 4-9; cf. also pp. 417, 5-11; 429, 5-21.
69. It is interesting to observe that Kleist's speculations precede his acquaintance with Schubert's investigations on decomposition; the latter were published in 1806 and 1807 in *Ahndungen einer allgemeinen Geschichte des Lebens*.
70. K., V, p. 327, 4-15.

71. N., II, p. 312, No. 429.
72. N., III, p. 62, No. 311; cf. K., V, p. 203, 27 ff.
73. N., I, pp. 114-118.
74. Herders *Sämtl. Werke*, ed. Suphan, XVI, pp. 567, 569-570; cf. Brinkmann, *Die Idee des Lebens in der deutschen Romantik*, p. 77.
75. N., III, p. 62, No. 311.
76. K., V, p. 239, 11-14; cf. pp. 153, 10-12; 171, 8-10; 203, 29-33.
77. N., III, p. 96, No. 435; II, p. 215, No. 162; cf. H., II, p. 160.
78. N., IV, pp. 223-224.
79. K., II, p. 231, 22-24; cf. Unger, *Herder, Novalis u. Kleist*, pp. 116-117.
80. K., IV, p. 21, No. 18.
81. K., IV, pp. 182-187.
82. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 27-28.
83. K., V, pp. 330, 331.
84. K., III, p. 304, 13-16.
85. Cf. Josef Nadler, *Die Berliner Romantik, 1800-1814*, Berlin (Reiss), 1921, p. 57.
86. *Lucinde*, p. 81.
87. K., V, p. 287, 20-24.
88. K., V, p. 433, 8-12.
89. *Phöbus* (now available in a reprint by Meyer & Jessen, München, 1924), 9.-10. Stück, pp. 3-13 (= Müller's *Vermischtte Schriften*, 2d ed., Wien, 1817, II, pp. 141 ff.)
90. *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 240.
91. Cf. Heinrich von Kleist's *Conception of the Tragic*, pp. 92-93.
92. Lütteken, *Die Dresdener Romantik und Heinrich von Kleist*, p. 71; Kluckhohn, *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 259.
93. *Sämtl. Werke*, ed. Werner, XI, p. 333.

CHAPTER X

1. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, II, 5th ed., p. 101.
2. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 4, 17-18, 27.
3. *Briefe*, p. 18.

4. *Briefe*, p. 47.
5. *Briefw.*, p. 48.
6. *Über die Religion*, 2. Ausg., pp. 65, 177.
7. *Ath.*, III, 1, pp. 120–121.
8. *Briefw.*, p. 56.
9. N., II, pp. 243–245.
10. G., IV, 11, p. 264.
11. N., I, p. lxiv.
12. *Deutsche Rundschau*, 161 (Oct., 1914), pp. 116–117;
cf. K., V, p. 326, 19–p. 327, 3.
13. *Lucinde*, p. 88.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
15. N., I, p. 10.
16. K., V, pp. 95, 14–16; 250, 12–13; 255, 34–35.
17. K., V, p. 238, 32–p. 239, 2; it is interesting to notice that
the last sentence, in the same metrical form, occurs in K., V,
p. 160, 26–27.
18. E.g., K., V, p. 436, 22–23; N., I, p. 16.
19. N., I, p. 18.

CHAPTER XI

1. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 5th ed., pp. 34 ff.
2. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 107.
3. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 64–65, 158, 165.
4. Schillers Briefe, ed. Jonas, V, p. 119; cf. Rouge, *Frédéric Schlegel*, p. 105.
5. F. S., II, p. 189, 10–15.
6. F. S., II, p. 198, 24–27.
7. F. S., II, p. 188, 36–37.
8. N., II, pp. 12–13.
9. N., II, pp. 117–118.
10. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 155.
11. K., V, p. 327, 22–24.
12. Cf. Erich Schmidt in K., III, pp. 135, 136; Otto Brahm,
Das Leben Heinrich von Kleists, Berlin (Fleischel), 4th ed.
1911, p. 179.
13. K., V, p. 301.

CHAPTER XII

1. Cf. Mehlis, *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 25.
2. Kants gesammelte Schriften, herausgegeben von der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin (Reimer), 1900-, VIII, p. 35; cf. Heinz Kindermann, *Entwicklung der Sturm- und Drangbewegung*, Wien (Österr. Bundesverlag), 1925, p. 4.
3. *Über die Religion*, 2. Ausg., p. 83.
4. *Ath.*, II, 1, pp. 15-16.
5. N., II, p. 114, No. 18.
6. G., I, 37, p. 130.
7. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 125; III, 1, p. 15.
8. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 8.
9. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 7.
10. Hebbel's idea of the tragedy of existence and the metaphysical "sin" of individuation seems to be anticipated by Friedrich Schlegel's recognition "dass nichts anmassender sein kann, als überhaupt zu existieren, oder gar auf eine bestimmte selbständige Art zu existieren. Aus dieser ursprünglichen Grundanmassung folgen nun doch einmal alle abgeleiteten." (*Ath.*, I, 2, p. 9.)
11. K., IV, p. 217, 15-19.
12. Hanna Hellmann, *Heinrich von Kleist. Das Problem seines Lebens und seiner Dichtung*, Heidelberg (Winter), 1908, p. 25.
13. Cf. Kluckhohn, *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 137.
14. *Ath.*, III, 1, p. 104.
15. K., V, p. 342, 22-25.
16. K., IV, p. 146, 10-11, 24-30.
17. Steig, *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe*, p. 275.
18. K., V, p. 430, 3-20.
19. Cf. Biedermann, *Heinrich von Kleists Gespräche*, p. 129.
20. Cf. K., II, p. 462.
21. K., V, p. 375, 15-17.
22. N., III, p. 4, No. 6.
23. *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin (Sonntagsbeilage), Sept. 19, 1909.
24. S., XII, p. 184, 8-14.

25. *Ath.*, I, 2, pp. 29–30.
26. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 178.
27. *Denkmale der inneren Entwicklung Schleiermachers*, p. 117, supplement to: Wilhelm Dilthey, *Leben Schleiermachers*, Berlin (Reimer), 1870.
28. K., V, p. 418, 14–18.

CHAPTER XIII

1. H., II, pp. 155–156.
2. H., IV, pp. 265, 292.
3. N., II, p. 126; *Ath.*, I, 1, p. 90.
4. *Monologen*, ed. Mulert, Leipzig (Meiner), 2d ed., 1914, p. 63.
5. *Deutsche Rundschau*, 161 (Oct. 1914), p. 117.
6. K., V, p. 195, 2–4.
7. *Lucinde*, pp. 8, 87.
8. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 125.
9. K., IV, p. 149, 5–19.
10. S., XII, p. 176, 9–14.
11. W., I, pp. 214–215.
12. K., IV, p. 149, 29–p. 150, 4; cf. pp. 263–264.
13. *Lucinde*, p. 61.
14. W., I, pp. 161–162.
15. W., I, pp. 268, 301.
16. K., V, p. 429, 24–26.
17. W., I, pp. 167–168, 194.
18. K., IV, p. 78, 22–23.
19. W., I, pp. 187–188, 194.
20. W., I, pp. 188–189.
21. H., II, pp. 72, 75.
22. W., I, p. 164.
23. K., V, p. 429, 31–33.
24. N., IV, pp. 173–174.
25. *Ath.*, II, 2, p. 232; W., I, pp. 309–310.
26. N., IV, pp. 75, 252.
27. N., IV, pp. 218–219.
28. N., II, pp. 303–304.
29. N., III, pp. 173, No. 40; 284, No. 712.

30. Servaes, *Heinrich von Kleist*, Leipzig (Seemann), 1902, p. 94.
31. K., V, p. 297, 5.
32. Petersen, "Heinrich von Kleists dramatische Kunst," in *Jahrbuch der Kleist-Gesellschaft*, 1921, pp. 15-17.
33. *Euphorion*, XX (1913), pp. 681 ff.
34. G., IV, 19, pp. 18-19.

CHAPTER XIV

1. F. S., I, p. 140, 29-31.
2. N., II, p. 114.
3. Cf. Lersch, *Der Traum in der deutschen Romantik*, pp. 31-32.
4. N., II, p. 216, No. 166.
5. K., IV, p. 136, 28-p. 137, 12.
6. K., II, p. 283, 15 ff.
7. Cf. verses 743, 748, 797, 800, 804, 810, 829, 831, 1456, 1468-1470, 2227.
8. K., III, pp. 329-330.
9. K., III, pp. 364, 368-371.

CHAPTER XV

1. *Ath.*, II, 1, p. 16.
2. S., XII, pp. 229-230; 249, 27-31.
3. S., XII, p. 393.
4. H., V, p. 395.
5. Cf. Mehlis, *Die deutsche Romantik*, p. 254.
6. E.g., N., II, pp. 255-257; III, pp. 143-150.
7. *Europa*, I, 1, p. 59.
8. F. S., I, p. 154, 15.
9. *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, IX, 2 (1912), p. 269.
10. F. S., II, pp. 195, 3-5; 196, 5-6.
11. *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 181.
12. S., XII, pp. 191, 12-14; 229-230; 249, 21-31.
13. *Jahrbuch der Kleist-Gesellschaft*, 1921, pp. 3 ff.

14. Petersen, *Die Wesensbestimmung der deutschen Romantik*, p. 57.
15. Cf. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, p. 141.
16. *Briefe*, pp. 292-293.
17. A somewhat similar point is made by a reviewer in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* (June 19, 1807), who characterizes Kleist's *Amphitryon* as "durchaus im romantischen Geiste gedichtet, da in den ernsten und scherhaften Partien die Reflexion überall gesetzgebend und bildend vorherrscht." (Cf. Ullmann u. Gotthard, *Geschichte des Begriffes "Romantisch,"* pp. 269 f.)
18. *Briefe*, p. 170.
19. F. S., I, p. 114, 15-17.
20. K., V, p. 300, 8-17.
21. N., III, p. 11, No. 35.
22. Körner, *Romantiker u. Klassiker*, p. 90.
23. Cf. also *Ath.*, III, 2, p. 180.
24. *Ath.*, III, 2, pp. 179-181.
25. Heinrich Heines *Briefwechsel*, herausgegeben von Friedrich Hirth, München u. Berlin (Müller), 1914-1920, I, p. 430.
26. K., III, p. 301, 17-33.
27. K., IV, pp. 25, 26.
28. *Briefwechsel zwischen Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, p. 128.
29. K., III, pp. 189-191.
30. K., V, p. 418, 21-24.
31. K., IV, p. 318.
32. Cf. the reproduction in Servaes, *Heinrich von Kleist*, p. 75.
33. N., III, p. 146.
34. *Ath.*, I, 2, p. 81.
35. G., IV, 19, p. 402.
36. Cf. Wolff von Gordon, *Die dramatische Handlung in Sophokles' "König Ödipus" und Kleists "Der zerbrochene Krug,"* Halle (Niemeyer), 1926.
37. K., II, pp. 18-19.
38. *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, p. 40.
39. *Briefw.*, pp. 63-65.

40. Cf. K., V, pp. 362, 31-363, 1; 371, 25-27; 375, 17-19.
41. K., V, p. 376, 14-15.
42. K., V, p. 370, 9-11.
43. G., IV, 20, pp. 15-16.
44. *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst u. Literatur*, in *Sämtl. Werke*, herausg. v. Böcking, V, p. 16.
45. K., V, p. 327, 21-24.

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